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THE

CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE;

BEING

A SERIES OF

TALES FOR WINTER EVENINGS.

BY

ISABELLA JANE TOWERS.

LONDON, 1828:

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,

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DIRECTION TO THE BINDER.——The Plate to face page 286.

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INTRODUCTION.

In presenting these little tales to the juvenile public, it is perhaps desirable that a few words should be offered to their parents and guardians: a mother, with a numerous family of children, whose "ultima thule" of delight is "a story from mamma," is a circumstance too often met with in prefaces to books, as well as in real life, for it to be dwelled on here, with a probability of its exciting any interest. The author will therefore merely observe, that she has selected a few of the Tales which, during the recital, had lighted up the happy countenances of her children; and which she hoped would instruct the understanding, while they interested the imagination, and warmed the heart. These stories having been committed to writing, obtained the approval of friends, whose judgment the author respected; and who advised her to add them to the "Thousand and one Tales" already before

the joyous "Tide of Children," now flowing in from school to their own happy "Fire-sides."

Such was the origin of this little volume: and if, in perusing it, her young readers be enticed, and pleasantly led on to *feel and admire the wonders of creation—to shun the fascination of frivolity and dissipation—to pity the situation, while they condemn the actions of a brave and hardy set of men,* who, under other and less tempting circumstances, might be a blessing, instead of a bane to their country,—*to look with abhorrence on the influence and wretched consequences of superstition,—and to be sensible of the sad results of disobedience,*— if, in a word, the youthful mind be excited to reflection, to the love of truth and sincerity, and to the cultivation of kind and benevolent feelings, the author will not have taxed her imagination, nor have written in vain; she will not have "sown the wind, or reaped the whirlwind."

December 15*th*, 1827.

THE

CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE.

TALE THE FIRST.

THE SMUGGLERS;

OR THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ABLE TO KEEP A SECRET.

Mr. Bennet was a respectable and industrious tradesman, who had acquired, by long attention to business, a sufficient property to enable himself and his wife to live comfortably, and even genteelly, without any farther necessity for exertion in his trade; it was that of a grocer, and was situated in one of the narrow lanes near Holborn. The confinement to the shop for so many years, had rather injured his health, and he at last consented to sell his business, and leave London entirely.—Mrs. Bennet had lived much by the sea, before she was married, and she longed to retire to the neighbourhood that had afforded her so much pleasure, and the recollection of which had haunted her like a happy dream, through the long fifteen years that she had passed in Fetter Lane.

The worthy couple had two children, a boy named Robert, now twelve years old, and a girl called Fanny, who was a year younger. They were both at school near Gravesend, and their parents decided to call and see them on their way to Margate, where they resolved to remain for a few weeks, in order to search for a residence on the Kent coast. This they did, and found a pretty and convenient house on Castle Terrace, at Upper Deal, which they bought furnished; and having removed to it, they sent for their children home, some weeks afterwards, for the summer holydays.

Deal was chosen for its beautiful and ever bustling sea view; no vessel from the south could enter the River Thames without passing through the narrow channel that separates England from France; and in fine weather the coast of our French neighbours is distinctly seen from Deal. The heights near Dover, and the town and port of Ramsgate, are beautiful objects also; while the daring and busy fishing boats, and the noble beach, are constant sources of varying amusement which required no exertion to be enjoyed; this to Mr B., who had been shut in from all active recreation behind his counter for so many years, was a desirable circumstance; for he had had few opportunities of cultivating a taste for reading, and would have found his time hang heavily in the retirement of a less bustling place.

Although Mr Bennet was not a *literary* man, that is, fond of books, he was upright and benevolent, and had a large share of *good sense*, as it is called, which he used for the benefit of those who belonged to him.

He was very anxious that his son should become an honest man. Mr B. once heard that Pope has written in one of his poems, "An honest man's the noblest work of God;" and he admired the assertion so much, that he had been known to say, "If ever I read a book of poetry, it shall be the one in which that line is to be found; 'tis as good as prose, and is not unworthy to be written in the bible."—That Robert might be just and upright, in fact a tradesman of integrity, was his earnest wish; and judging from all he saw of his son, his wish was he thought likely to be gratified. One fault the youth possessed, however, which his father's 'good sense' told him, would for ever prevent him from becoming a great or good character, unless it could be overcome; and that was a want of steadiness, or rather *firmness*—a lack of resolution to keep any secret that might be intrusted to him. Mr Bennet resolved to cure his son of this sad fault if possible, and he soon had occasion to begin his intended plan.

One day they strolled down to the beach together, to see the fishing boats come tumbling in through the sparkling surf, which a fresh breeze from the N. E. had teazed into a pretty rage; white fleecy clouds scudded over the clear blue sky, and mottled the troubled waters with their shadows. The sun shone warm and bright; the heavy-winged sea gull flapped over their heads; now aloft, now skimming near the surface of the water; now hovering over the curled tops of the loud breakers, his keen eye watching the destined fish beneath; his long powerful wings bent by the strain of the wind into a double bow; the gaily painted

pleasure boats were scudding in different directions; their swelling sails catching the lights and shadows of the sun and clouds: the stately vessels in the *offing* with all their canvass crowded, steadily moving on towards other climes and other seas.—" Father," said Robert, " what a famous day this would be to go out a fishing in a pleasure boat; James Grange says his father often goes with a party; might not *we* go?"—" I was that moment thinking of the scheme, my dear boy," replied his father, " and had determined to take you all to-morrow, if Mr Grange and his family can go with us; and of course if the weather should continue so favourable, but I do not wish you to mention *to any one* that we are likely to go to-morrow; for if we should be —— but I need not give you any reason, it is sufficient for you to know that I *have* a reason; but look what a fine haul of fish Tom Marling has in his boat! let us go and buy some for dinner."—They walked on a few yards to the strong built fishing vessel which had just dashed through the noble breakers in fine style, and now lay on her side, dripping and looking as if she were resting after her exertions among the unruly waves. Tom Marling was an industrious, civil, and sober fisherman, whom Mr and Mrs Bennet had known from the time they first came to Deal; and as he had a large family and a sick wife, they had been kind to him and assisted him on several occasions: they gave him the preference also when they wanted fish, always buying it of him. " Well, Tom, have you had good luck to-day?" said Mr B.—" Why, yes, sir, we had a goodish haul at the back of the Goodwin;

the wind shifted this morning at day-break, and freshened to a stiffish breeze, or we should not have been home again in time for you to have this fine pair of soles for your dinner;" added he, smiling and handing up a pair to one of his little boys, who was scrambling up the lower side of the boat. "Here, Jem, take these to the gentleman, they are the best I have catched." Mr Bennet approved of them, bought and sent them to Castle Terrace by the ragged little messenger. After some farther conversation with Tom, they returned home; Fanny met them at the door, the very picture of happiness. "Oh, my dear Robert, how glad I am you are come! do you know the carpenter has been here since you went out, and has put up the swing that mamma ordered last week, between the two walnut trees in the garden; and I have *so* wanted you to come back to give me a good swing!"—"Oh, to be sure, I'll set you off in fine style; but you must learn to swing yourself."—"Well, so I will, if you'll teach me; I cannot learn without being told how, you know," continued she, as she scampered after her brother down the long walk of the garden. She was soon seated, and swung till she was ashamed to keep him any longer. "Thank you, dear Robert, now stop me, and give me a little lesson in swinging myself; and then I'll try and make you fly as high as I have been."—"No, Fan, I like to manage for myself; but I'll give you your lesson as you call it: look here—now I am off, watch how I shall rise; when I want to go forward I lean back, and shoot out my legs and feet, which throws the greater weight behind the seat and forces

it onwards; when I am up, and want to go back again, I lean forward, and tuck my feet and legs quite under me."—"Oh how easily you seem to rise!" said Fanny.—"Yes; but it is awkward at first, for you will feel as if you ought to do just the contrary; you shall try for yourself in a few minutes." He was now up to an enviable height, and poor Fanny sighed as she thought how impossible it seemed for her to attain such an elevation. Robert told her that he saw all over the other trees in their own and their neighbours' gardens; "and I can see the sea too," added he; "Oh, how I wish you had been on the beach this morning with my father and me! Did you and my mother bathe before breakfast to-day?"—"Yes; but I do not like it half so well as afterwards."—"Well, you could not bathe now if you would, for it is high water, and the waves do come tumbling in at such a rate! It is not rough either, for there are several pleasure boats sailing about: oh, how I should like a sail!"—"Perhaps papa will let us all go some day," said Fanny.—"Perhaps he will," replied Robert with a suppressed smile, at the thought of the pleasant news he *could* tell his sister if he chose. "Mamma has given me leave to go and pick up curiosities to-morrow; and I dare say this rough wind will bring up lots of shells, and weeds, and beautiful things."—"I don't think you'll go to-morrow," replied Robert.—"La, why?"—"Oh, because——I don't think you will."—"But *why?* how silly of you only to say you 'don't think.'"—"Well, I do *not* think you will, but I shan't tell you why," added he, swinging higher than ever.—"Then

you are very ill-natured, and I did not expect—so as I longed for the holydays on purpose to be with you—I did not think you would have been cross and spiteful to me; *I* tell *you every* thing that I think will give you pleasure, and you won't tell *me* such a little trifle as this: but I believe you have nothing to tell," added she, losing her *rather* gentle tone, and bursting out into a *flame* that looked very like a passion; "Indeed I don't care if you have, for I am sure if you had, you would have told it me long ago, for papa says you can never keep a secret; and so as you choose to be cross to me, I shall go;" and she turned to leave him. He was vexed in his turn at the unkindness of her expressions, and instead of being put more on his guard by her unexpected mention of his great fault, he resolved to tell the secret, rather than let his sister suppose he had not one to tell. "Fanny! Fanny!" shouted he, as she continued to walk away, though with a slackened pace, when she heard him call her; "If you'll come back, I'll show you that you are an ill-tempered passionate girl; for I *have* a secret that you'd be glad enough to hear." Fanny turned, less anxious, certainly, to have the former part of her brother's speech proved, than she was eager to get the secret, and thereby obtain another proof of his want of secrecy, to taunt him with at some future time. And this disgraceful little malice, which showed itself (though rarely) when she was irritated, was Fanny's worst fault. Robert's proceeded, in a great degree, from too much good nature; his sister's, evidently from being too ill-natured, or "*cattish*," as it has been

called. Robert let himself "*die*"* as she came towards him; his little vexation was over, and he only remembered that he could gratify her, and do no harm to any body by telling her his secret. "Let me see you smile," said he, peeping into her half sullen averted face, and setting her an example of good humour, "or you shall not know it!". She could not hold out against this kindness, but flung her arms round his neck and kissed him, as he said rapidly, "We *are all* going out to fish in a pleasure boat *to-morrow*, and that was what I meant when I said I did not think you would go to hunt for curiosities."—"Dear, good Robert! what a brute I have been to you! will you forgive me?" and all thought of taunting him at some future time, vanished, as she felt to hate herself for her spiteful intention. They were now the best friends on earth, and planned their intended excursion quite to their satisfaction. They were called into the house to dinner, and Robert had forgotten to beg Fanny would not tell any one his secret; but though he thought of it during dinner, it gave him no uneasiness, for, he considered, "she has only my mother to talk to, and of course she will not begin the subject to *her*." The children were separated during the afternoon, and the caution was forgotten. Some time after tea, Fanny suddenly recollected that her favourite nankeen pelisse had a green stain on it in front, where she had fallen down while scrambling after a weed which she called wild migno-

* That is, he ceased to exert himself, but sat still; and of course the swing soon stopped moving.

nette, near the edge of a low cliff, and she went to Susan to ask her to wash it out for her. "Do you want it particularly to-night, miss?" said the girl—"I shall want it for to-morrow," replied Fanny.—"Lauk, miss Fanny, I don't think you will; it will be very hot, I'm sure, to-morrow; the wind fell so at sun-set, and it looks so white over sea, you'll be melted in that hot pelisse if you walk in it; I always think new nankeen is as hot as cloth: you'd better wear your pretty new silk spencer," added she, eager to avoid the little extra 'job,' as she was just seated at her own needlework. —"Susan, it must be done; and if you won't do it, I must wash it myself: I shall spoil my blue silk spencer on the water, and my nankeen pelisse will not be too hot there, if the day is ever so warm."—"Oh, I did not know that you were going on the water, Miss Fanny, or I would not have said a word against washing it; I'll do it directly: only think of your going in a boat! what you have wished for ever since you have been at home!"—"Oh, but I am not certain that we are going," said Fanny, now remembering Robert's secret; "so say nothing about it."—"Oh, no, to be sure, miss; I won't so much as say a single word to any living soul:" and Fanny left the kitchen.

"And so, they're all going out, and most likely for the whole day," thought Susan, "what a good opportunity it will be for me to run over to Walmer to see mother!—Lod! and I'll go too! only I must just trim up my bonnet a bit."—Down went the cap she was making, and away she ran out into the yard, with a ball of cotton after her, first popping about the floor,

then hurrying out at her heels; and two yards of "bordering" fluttering from her apron, like the streamer of a boat.

"Bill!—here Bill!" said she to the footboy, who was whistling, and cleaning his master's boots; "Bill, I want to run out to the shop; while *they're* at supper to-night, will you answer the bell for me?"—"Mayhap I may, and mayhap I mayn't; it all rests with you."—"How do you mean?"—"Why, if you tell me what you want to buy at the shop, I'll go in and wait upon 'em for you; and if you won't tell me, why, I shan't, that's all."—"Well then, you curious creature, I only want to buy myself a yard and three quarters (I dare say that will be enough," said she to herself) "of figured pink satin ribbon for my bonnet, *that's all.*"—"My stars! and what are you in such a hurry to be so fine for?"—"La! what signifies it to you?" replied Susan: "but," thought she, "I may as well tell him at once, or he'll keep me here catechising till midnight; he's such a queer tempered fellow; besides, though Miss Fanny did desire me not to tell, I shan't mind his knowing it, for in a few hours every body must hear of it.—Well then, if you *must* know, they're all going out a fishing in a pleasure boat to-morrow; and I want to go home and see mother; for Jem Sykes will be there, and so—now you know the whole—oh, but you mustn't tell any one about the water party: I need not bid you not though; for you'll have only the boots to talk to, when I am gone;" added she, laughing, and scuttering back into the kitchen to wash the pelisse.

" Oh, oh! going on the water!—I wonder if they've engaged a boat?—it will be no harm to put Sam Gunnel in the way of getting the job; and then he shall give me something for my good nature, if master should choose his boat. I'll run down to the beach this minute and tell him: there will be plenty of time before supper."

Sam was sitting on a granite post, which was used to lash vessels to, singing a melancholy sea ditty, and very industriously mending his sail: the heavy *crunching* of William's shoes in the deep shingle made him look up.—" Ah, Bill! what wind blew *you* here?"—" I've run fit to break my neck to tell you that master is going out a fishing to-morrow, and if you make haste and apply, mayhap you may get the job. Good night; I can't stay a minute, I shall be wanted. But I say," added he, looking back as he toiled again through the pebbles, " if your boat should be the one, you'll give me something for my *recommendation!*"—" Aye, aye, never fear; good night, and thank ye!"

The next morning, at breakfast time, Susan came into the room, and said, " Please sir, Sam Gunnel would be glad to speak to you."—" Well, let him come in." Sam entered, smoothing his black hair almost into his eyes.—" Morning, Sam, what's your business with me?"—" Hope no offence, sir, but I heard you was going out a fishing to-day, and I thought I would make so bold as come and ask if you was engaged with a boat; because mine, sir (the ' Pretty Sally') is as tight a little thing, and as clean a sailor, as you'd wish to see; she's been fresh painted this summer too; and her

'commodations' is as good as heart can wish; and I shall be *vary* thankful, sir, if you hav'n't bespoke a boat of any one, if you would please to go with me." Mr Bennet glanced at his son, who was striving in vain, to appear unconcerned; he was pale, and stared into his tea-cup as if it had been full of curiosities: he *would* not meet his father's eye, and Mr B saw at once the source of Sam's information.—"I have *not* engaged a boat, Sam," said he; "but in half an hour I should have bespoken Tom Marling's; however, as you have applied, we will go with you; we shall be ready to sail by noon, and we will be on the beach by that time; do you be ready."—"Thank you, sir; yes, sir."—"Good morning, Sam!—oh! who told you I should want a boat to-day?"—"William Surliman, sir, your boy."—"Very well, good day;" and Sam left the room. "Ring the bell, Fanny." Fanny was paler than usual! "Susan, tell William I want him." William came. "Did you tell Sam Gunnel that I should want a boat to-day?"—"No, sir."—"No! then how could he hear of it?"—"I don't know, I'm sure, sir!"—"Why, he tells me that he had his information from you."—"Not from *me*, sir," said the foolish, wicked boy; "I ha'n't seen him this fortnight."—"Oh, you bad boy! you shall not stay in my house now I find you are so given to lying!"—"I am certain, sure I—"—"Hush, hush—say no more; leave the room!"—"Papa, it is all my fault," said Fanny; "I asked Susan to wash out a green stain in my nankeen pelisse, and she told William; for I asked her myself, this morning, if she had kept her word, and she said, 'I only told

William; for he had no one to talk to.' "—" But who told you, Fanny?" She was silent; Robert's voice faltered, as he said, " I did, Father!"—" Poor, dear, weak-headed boy!" said his good father pityingly;—" How grieved I am that my duty obliges me to punish you! If I gave way to my own feelings, I should spare yours now, to spoil your character hereafter; that is, when you become a man: I must therefore distress myself and your dear mother, in order to do what I consider to be my duty by you."—" I fear I can guess too well the nature of his fault," said Mrs B. " and I am too anxious to see it cured, for me to interfere or intercede with your father," added she, to the weeping and unhappy Robert.—" Go, go up to your chamber," said his father, " you must remain there all day; take as much bread, and milk, and water as you think will suffice for your dinner. I shall lock you in, and take the key with me; I punish you for your disobedience to my commands, you understand." Fanny followed her brother with her eyes, which were swimming in tears, and as he shut the door, she burst into a fit of crying; for she saw that she had brought all his sorrow and his punishment upon him: when her sobs would allow her to speak, she told her father and mother every word that had passed between them while they were swinging; and, to her credit it should be mentioned, she threw the whole of the blame on herself, and praised her brother's exceeding good nature, with all her eloquence; she finished by saying, " Now, dear parents, that you see how wicked, and teazing, and spiteful I was to him, and how kind he was to me, *pray*, PRAY

let me stay at home, and take him; oh, he wished so very much to go, and expected so much pleasure! Oh, *do* be so very kind as to let him be of the party, and let me remain!"

"Fanny," said her father, "your candid confession does not lessen your fault; I am grieved to find how much you have contributed to your brother's unhappiness. I cannot alter my determination at your request; for I consider you too blamable to merit any favour being granted you. The *only* point on which you deserve less anger than your brother is, that you did not wilfully transgress my orders; nor tell a secret, knowing it to be a secret. What say you, my dear?" added Mr B. addressing his wife. "That I entirely agree with, and quite approve of all you have said and done my love," replied she. "Now go, and bathe your eyes with cold water, Fanny; and let this disappointment (for I know you will not enjoy your excursion without Robert) let it be a lesson to you not to tempt or triumph over weakness in any form."

If Fanny had been asked, when she returned from the fishing party, whether it had been a pleasant excursion, she would have said "no," for she thought so. Her brother's absence, and his lonely punishment, added to her own remorse for the large share she bore in causing his grief, poisoned every incident that occurred, and which would otherwise have been sources of enjoyment to her.

Robert had ample time for repentance, and to form the best resolutions, which he felt sure no power would ever induce him to break. Poor fellow! had he been

a few years older, he would have been less confident in his own strength, and more cautious of trying it His father received him again into favour, and his adventure appeared to be forgotten. The holydays were drawing to a close, and Mr and Mrs Bennet resolved to keep the young people at home for two or three months longer; that they might enjoy all the fine weather of the latter summer. Their parents felt too, that they would be lonely without the lively children, and decided to send them to school, in future, much nearer home; Dover was fixed upon as the most convenient distance; and they all made a day's pleasant excursion to arrange for the two departures at Michaelmas.

William was discharged, as Mr Bennet had found that the lad was inclined to answer very saucily when he was spoken to. The sad habit of telling falsehoods, however, was his greatest fault, and for that he was dismissed A boy named Joseph had been hired in his place, but he was so idle that it was impossible to keep him.

One beautiful afternoon in August, Mr Bennet proposed a walk towards the Downs; Mrs Bennet said she should be glad to go, but that she had sent word to Mrs Grange, who was unwell, that she and Fanny would walk down, and take a quiet cup of tea with her; "Well then, Robert and I must go together; I am sorry you cannot join us, the weather is so very fine." Fanny was pleased at the thought of paying Sarah Grange a visit, who had promised her a sight of a

beautiful collection of foreign shells, and to tell her their different scientific names; she was almost reluctant, however, to see her father and brother going for a walk without her; but she could not enjoy both pleasures, and was wisely contented with one of them. It was, indeed, a sweet afternoon! Summer appeared unwilling to take leave of the lovely country that she had made so beautiful: she seemed to linger on her way. The yellow sun threw his rich beams over the town and quiet sea, as the walkers left the houses, and struck off towards the rising ground. The heavens were clear; only one of its beautiful ornaments was to be seen; and that one cloud had stationed itself in the west, as if to await there the coming of the golden sun, to give splendour to his setting, and to receive in return from him all the gorgeous colouring that he seems so fond of flinging on the western clouds. The soft air whispered to the travellers, as it wandered in search of wild flowers, to steal their scent; but the sweet smelling weeds had all shed their perfume on the wide downs; and now meekly bent their flowerless heads, loaded with the seeds of future fragrance for other gales to waft. Mr B. and Robert walked still farther on the soft mossy grass, and farther yet, from man and all his little bustling. Now and then, a happy lark, or delicate and timid wheatear, sprang from its ground nest, and glanced between them and the declining sun, giving a momentary view of its gauze-like wings; swarms of joyous gnats, that seemed too eager for play ever to think of food, floated in the

sun-beams (their happy world) and sang their fairy melody all around; and the merry grasshoppers chirped loudly and incessantly of their happiness.

From the eminence that Mr Bennet and Robert had now gained, they looked on every side, and beauty and happiness were about them! The benevolence of Mr B.'s mind made him admire the goodness of the Great Being who had filled the vast space with happiness: he was no poet, nor reader of poetry, or he might have called to mind pages of infinite beauty, which would have enabled him to give utterance to the grateful and gentle thoughts which crowded in his heart, but which never reached his lips. He needed no aid of poetry, however, to make him feel gratitude to his Maker, nor to wish that his son should adore the Great Author of all goodness; in plain language therefore, but with sincere feelings of devotion, he pointed out to Robert the infinite number of objects which that wonderful organ the eye could take in and admire, at a single glance! The vast and mighty sea; the awful expanse of the majestic sky; the swelling, and apparently boundless downs; the brilliant sun;—all connected with the happiness of the creatures formed by his creative power! "Then those creatures," added he, "our two rational selves, thinking, talking, admiring; —the cold, silent, gliding inhabitants of the blue, salt sea;—the joyous birds, and minute insects, that sport in the sun-beam; all prove the goodness, wisdom, and power of the Almighty! but, my boy, I still agree with Pope, that 'an honest man's the noblest work of God:'

and I humbly but ardently pray that I may live to see that 'noblest work' in you, my dear son!"

"But come," added he, after a pause, "we have loitered here some time; your mother and sister will have returned before we reach home; for I wish to go back another way, to vary the walk:" so they turned their steps to the right.

In about half a mile, they came unexpectedly to the edge of one of those unaccountable chalk pits with which the coast of Kent abounds; particularly the Isle of Thanet. It was at a great distance from any habitation, was perpendicular all round, excepting on one side, where a gradual slope appeared to have been made, for an entrance. "Oh, what a beautiful place!" said Robert; "there is some of Fanny's favourite weed growing, at the edge on the other side; I'll go round and get it." He ran and stooped down, reaching over the side, and was just going to gather some, when he suddenly stopped, remained still, as if listening, then beckoned to his father to come round; motioning him to walk gently, and not to speak. Mr Bennet did as he was requested; then his son whispered him, as he laid himself quietly down on his chest, "hark! I hear voices and digging, just underneath where we are!"— "Bless me! so do I!" replied his father, in the same cautious tone. "Let us move a little farther beyond this old thorn; I can hold fast by the stem, and look over," said Robert; and he moved gently to the spot: his father following him.

"Oh, father, I can see a cave in the side of the cliff,

under where we were just now; but the bushes at the bottom keep us from seeing it any where but here. Look! a spade is flung down! and they are pecking up the ground with a pick-axe! Look there! the sun is just come from behind that cloud, and shines quite into the cavern. I see two men, and a sack full of something lying on the ground! Oh, how dreadful!" added he, as he shuddered, and hid his face in his hands. "They have murdered some one, have put him in a sack, and are going to bury him!!" murmured the terrified boy, pale, and trembling with horror. He continued to lie with his face covered, while his father watched the motions of the two men. He soon satisfied himself of the nature of their startling employment, and saw who they were; then rousing Robert, he told him to rise cautiously, and they would hasten home. Poor fellow! he was so overcome with fear, that his father found great difficulty in making him remove his hands from his eyes; so fearful was he of seeing again that dreadful cave! He at last arose, and then would have *run* all the way home; for fear the murderers should have seen them watching; and so, to prevent their telling any one, follow, and kill them. The terrified boy certainly appeared to have great reason for the alarm he suffered: the scene *was* suspicious. Robert had read books at school, and had heard stories, in which such horrible things as murder are made the chief attraction: the more shocking they are, the more the books are admired. A scene like this therefore, that appeared to realise all the tales he had heard, could not fail to make a great impression on the

youth; and he continued to walk hastily towards home; nor dared to look back till he heard his father (who was some little way behind) call to him. He turned, and saw nothing, to his great joy, but his father, the golden sky, the barren downs, and the solitary thorn, that marked the scene of the dreaded chalk-pit.

"Stay a minute, Bob; I am out of breath; there is nothing to fear!" Mr Bennet had been thinking over the same subject that had occupied his son's mind, and had been much puzzled how to act. *He* saw at once that the men were smugglers; one was Tom Marling, and the other Sam Gunnel. Robert's sad want of being able to keep a secret had first struck him with sorrow; for he felt that the men were not safe, if they were in his son's power: his first resolution therefore was, to let him remain in ignorance of the real state of the case; then he reflected, that it would be lowering his own character, as an upright man, in the opinion of his son, to let him suppose, that his *father should know of a murder having been committed, and yet conceal it! that* would be very shocking! No way remained, then, but for Mr Bennet to mention his discovery, tell his son the consequences of disclosing the circumstance, and leave the rest to the boy's honour.

When he came up to Robert he said, with an almost solemn countenance, "How I wish, my dear fellow, that the great fault in your character was cured!"—"Oh father, it is indeed! but you would not wish me to keep this dreadful thing a secret, would you?"—"Yes, my dear!"—Robert started as if he had seen one of the murderers. "Now, listen to me. Those men—

do you know who they were?"—"Yes; I thought one was Tom Marling, but I am not sure who the other was." Mr B. was grieved that Robert had recognised either of them, but it could not be avoided. "Well, these men," continued he, "are smugglers, not murderers!"—"Not murderers? why they are just the same; they are *all* bad, dreadful men, are they not, father; and all deserve hanging don't they?"—"Heaven forbid! where did you hear such a wicked remark?"—"Oh at school, father; Lieutenant Loyalton's son, and Dr Militant's, and Sir James Lawgame's sons, and Henry Gauge, and Dick Leno, and Sam Tallbutt, and several more, used to talk about the smugglers. I remember one day, James Loyalton had a letter from his sister, telling him that his father (who is in the 'preventive service,' and is stationed somewhere near the Reculvers) had been wounded in the arm by a smuggler, with a cutlass! Oh, how James did abuse the 'rascally villains' as he called them! and then, oh I dare say a dozen boys told us different stories, *all true*, that they had heard of these 'desperate characters,' so they called them. And William Lawgame, whose father is a magistrate, has a newspaper sent him very often; and I have read of dreadful battles between the poor sailors who are employed to watch them and seize their 'contraband goods,' (yes, *that's* the word, and it means against the law, I suppose) and these wicked men. I remember too, that Gauge said, his father (who is an excisceman) and Mr Leno, found out where some goods were buried in a great ploughed field near Herne Bay, and they sent word to Lieutenant Ridout, another

officer on the coast service, and he went in the middle of the night with six men; but somehow the smugglers found it out, and when the sailors came to the place, twelve of these murderers burst out upon them, and *such* a battle took place! Ah, I have heard so much about them, that I felt quite sorry when I found you had taken a house at Deal; because the boys said that was one of the worst places in the whole of England for these wretches; so I thought we should perhaps be killed by them; but I don't know how it is, I have never thought about them since I came home; where can they all be gone to? perhaps they have been found out, and so have made their escape, for I have never seen one." Mr Bennet smiled, and then said: "My dear boy, there is an old saying that 'one story's good till another's heard;' did you never, by any chance, hear any thing in favour of these men, or any excuse offered for them?"—"No, father; only one boy said his mother bought every thing she could of the smugglers, for she pitied the poor fellows."—"Well, since I have lived at Deal, I have enquired and heard much about these people; and as we walk I'll tell you some of the particulars, that you may judge for yourself whether they ought to be considered as such blood-thirsty, cruel, murderous villains, as you have been taught to consider them. You know Tom Marling, for instance—have always appeared partial to him, and eager to ask him questions connected with his hazardous profession; you have found him gentle, civil, honest; a kind husband, a good father, and an industrious man: this man, you see, is a smuggler!"—

" Aye, father, but I don't believe it *could* be Tom Marling that we saw in the chalk-pit; I dare say it was some wicked fellow who happened to have on the same sort of green and yellow handkerchief that Tom generally wears; oh, no! I'm pretty sure *he* would never be doing any thing so dreadful as murder, and bury—I mean—hide a sack full of contraband goods! and yet it MUST have been him too; for," added he, talking partly to himself, " I saw the same curious bit of sea weed in a hat at the mouth of the cave, that I noticed in Tom's hat this morning; for I asked him where he found it, it was so very beautiful!"

" Yes, Robert, it *was* your favourite Tom, and a companion, whom we saw."—" Then I'll never speak to——" " Gently, my boy, gently; Tom's life, you have seen, is that of an upright man; it is also one of exceeding toil, danger, and great anxiety. His father was a smuggler, his grandfather also, who was one of the most respectable and opulent men in the whole town: when he lived, the laws against smuggling were not so severe as they have been made of late years; nor were they who carried on the trade, looked upon and described as among the worst men in the community. If they are more inclined to fight now than heretofore, recollect that they are driven to it by the rigour of the laws, and that the property which they thus boldly endeavour to protect, is the result of their industry as much as my property is the reward of my application to business."—" Yes, but father you were reckoned an honest man in *your* trade, and did not break the laws; these men do."—" You have named the

only circumstance, my dear, that can be urged against them: they do break the laws; and inasmuch as the laws were wisely instituted to benefit all, they should not be broken through: but when laws are made, which will take the means of subsistence from a large number of the community, and no other method of gaining a livelihood for themselves and families is pointed out, or provided for the industrious fellows who have been deprived of their hitherto "fair" trade (as they call it); when too, a temptation is held out to them to transgress these laws, by making the prices of the articles they bring over here dearer than they are on the continent, and which *is* the case with many articles, such as brandy, cambric, hollands, &c., can you wonder (child as you are) that these unfortunate men, who from long habit consider their trade to be fair and honest as that of a shoemaker, grocer, or farmer? Can you wonder if they are rendered desperate, when they are ferretted out of their hiding places like rats by their fellow-countrymen; the property torn from them that they have procured with so much toil and danger, and secreted with so much caution and anxiety?

"You must not suppose however, from what I have said, that I 'take the smugglers' part,' as you boys at school would say; nor do I ever encourage them in their unlawful traffic; I pity them, and would have you pity them too; you may depend upon the truth of what I now tell you, that no class of the community who are honest, are worse as a body, than another. I saw that you had been prejudiced against them; and that your heart

had been hardened towards an industrious, though erring set of men; and I have, perhaps (from my wish to see more happiness among our fellow countrymen) said more in favour of these men than would be considered quite safe and warrantable."

"You should never hastily adopt any opinions to the prejudice of your fellow creatures, without endeavouring to gain all the information on the subject that you are able. Do you now think as ill of smugglers as you did?"—"Oh, dear father, I am as much astonished as if you had said that smugglers are angels! I could not believe, if YOU had not told me, that they could be any but the wickedest of men! Why should all those boys be so bitter against them?"—"Because their parents are too illiberal and narrow-minded themselves to teach their sons a truer story; or they are connected with government, and they think it is necessary to put down 'its enemies;' as if the poor fellows would be enemies of their own government, if it protected them and their trade, as it protects the soldiers and their trade! But here we are at home. Once more let me solemnly charge you to keep the circumstance that we have witnessed this afternoon a profound secret! Let me hope that your heart is too kind to run the hazard of ruining two, and perhaps many more, poor, industrious families, by disclosing any thing relating to the chalk-pit. Your want of firmness has hitherto injured only yourself, you have now the freedom, perhaps the lives, of one or more of your fellow creatures in your power; as you value my affection, and would avoid the reproaches of your own conscience all your life, never

tell any one a word of what we have witnessed this afternoon! Will you, dare you promise me that you will be secret?" Robert was much affected by his father's earnest and anxious appeal to him: he hoped and believed, that nothing but torture, such as he had read of in the "Inquisition," could extort a syllable from him; he therefore looked his father full in the face, gave him his hand, and with a firm voice, a good resolution, and a warm heart, assured him that "he would not disclose the secret of the chalk pit." Mr Bennet was, at least tried to be satisfied; he saw that Robert believed himself trust-worthy, and he was careful not to raise such a distrust of his own resolution in the boy's mind as should lead him to be careless whether he was trust-worthy or not. He smiled on him affectionately, shook his hand heartily, and they went in together. Over their lobster, at supper, the conversation of the happy family naturally turned on their separate engagements during the beautiful afternoon. Fanny was eager to tell, and eager to hear every thing agreeable; and Robert found his father of infinite use in coming to his aid when any topic, that got too near the chalk pit, had to be discussed: so anxious was the fearful boy to prove his fidelity to his father, that he avoided all mention of the awful spot with as much caution as he avoided the place itself, when he ran away from its alarming inmates! Mr B. therefore took up the description of their walk, and said, "we came home, Fanny, a new way, and I want you and your mother to see a beautiful chalk pit." Robert startled at the word; he wondered it did not

choke his father, and his heart fluttered for the next minute, so that his frill round his throat trembled, as Mr B. added, " Robert saw some of your pretty weed growing on the edge, and tried to reach it for you; but——" here the whole contents of the pepper-castor found themselves displayed on Robert's *claw*, owing to the force of the jerk which he unconsciously gave it in his anxiety; and the consequent laughing, sneezing, pitying, and settling, saved the poor boy any farther embarrassment: the subject was not again resumed. When the children and servants were gone to bed, Mr Bennet told his wife the whole circumstance of the smugglers, and added, " I am so fearful of Robert's ability to keep this secret, that I must go down to Tom Marling's house to warn him of his danger, and to advise him to remove his goods to a safer place."— " Oh my dear, it is past eleven! pray do not go down among those terrible men to-night; stay till day light, and go as early as you please!" " Why, Mrs B. you astonish me! you are as prejudiced as that silly boy is! have you forgotten our rambles all over the Isle of Thanet? our walks from Mr Smith's at Ramsgate to Mrs Stanley's at Broadstairs, during all hours of the night? have we not seen the poor fellows, peeping and hiding about behind the trees and hedges, when our lantern's unexpected glare would show us the startling sight of three or four silent, skulking, tall, brawny, weather-beaten fellows, in the most terrifying, lonely part of the road, and when you have fully expected to be made ' minced meat' of, by the agency of their ready cutlasses, have they not bade us a ' good night' as we

passed, in a tone so gentle and so kind, that its contrast from their suspicious appearance, and its relief to our—I mean your nervous terrors, was in itself a beautiful circumstance and a mercy! oh for shame for you to fear smugglers!" added he, tenderly kissing her cold cheek, for she was not quite reconciled to his intended walk, notwithstanding his eloquence in favour of smugglers!

"Well, my love!" replied she, trying to appear satisfied, "I will say nothing more to prevent your going, for I do recollect all you mention. Poor fellows! I often reproach myself for not purchasing their smuggled goods; because I can scarcely define which motive I act from, cowardice, or conscience: fear, lest I should be discovered, or a wish to discourage the trade, as being against the law. If every one would refuse to purchase smuggled goods, the trade would soon cease: but I keep you: I shall finish Fanny's frock while you are away." Mrs Bennet listened to the rapid footsteps of her worthy husband, and felt her spirits sink when she heard them no longer. The benevolent man, in the mean time walked briskly and fearlessly onwards. It was a night fit to succeed such a day as the last had been. Calm as it was, the grand voice of the sea was borne on the night air to his listening ear. On that steep coast (with shingles to chafe and fret, instead of flat noiseless sands to wander over "at its own sweet will") the ocean's gentlest noise is a deep sullen roar; and Mr Bennet, as he heard its restless breakers beat on the patient shore, could not help comparing its rough play and bellowing sound to the gambols of a chained

monster, struggling for its liberty. The low, dirty town was quiet; a light, here and there, in the little windows of the poor, showed that industry or sickness was within the dwellings. A fragrant smell of tobacco, kept down by the dewy night air, convinced Mr Bennet that some one was abroad; and soon he passed a group of silent fishermen and smugglers, lolling and smoking, at the door of a cottage, from which no ray of light was visible to betray them. The street led down to the sea, and he quickly came out in full view and hearing of its mighty presence and commotion. Three or four fishing boats, at anchor, were heaving and rolling on the waves, their thin masts crossed and recrossed the twinkling stars behind them as the vessels heeled; their clear, sharp, dark hulls were distinctly shown by the pale mass of water in which they floated. A rattling among the cordage made Mr Bennet aware that they had hands aboard, preparing to put to sea, and waiting the turn of the tide, when their companions on shore would join them. It was a lovely, a soothing, and a glorious sight: Mr B. turned from it with reluctance. The street in which Tom Marling lived was yet farther, and Mr Bennet soon found himself at the humble dwelling which contained a family of eleven human beings. No light was visible as he approached the hut; but a faint ray streamed through the cracks and key hole of the door, and came red and dull through poor Tom's watch coat, that was hung up at the window by way of curtain. Mr B. stepped cautiously, and looked around to see if he had been followed or observed: but no creature was in sight.

As he listened, he heard within the hut the wailing voice of a female—it was that of poor Sally, Tom's wife; she was sobbing—grief was added to her usual lot of affliction, for she was always ill. Mr B. could not bear to hear that which they supposed they were saying only to each other; he therefore knocked gently with his knuckles against the slender door. "Oh! good God! protect my poor children!" exclaimed the voice of Sally, in a hoarse whisper; "they have found it out, Tom, and are come to drag you to prison! oh, my poor little ones! what will become of them?" The sobs became quite distressing. "Now Sal! dear Sal!" replied Tom, "how can you frighten yourself so foolishly? let me go to the door; it's only Jack Splice, come to tell me whether he can go out instead of me to-night. Come, cheer up! let go of my arm. I must go to the door!"—"I shall die! indeed, Tom, I can't bear it. I know it's the officers after you; they have found out about Downton chalk pit, and so they come, in this quiet way, on purpose to put you off your guard. Tom, if you love me, and if you would not see me drop down dead off my chair at your feet, do not open the door!" Mr Bennet, owing to the silence of the street, heard every word; for, in their anxiety, the husband and wife had lost their caution, and were talking louder than prudence would have allowed them. It was an aukward situation for the kind-hearted man at the door. He tapped again. "There!" said Sally, that's not Jack Splice's way of knocking; if it had been Jack, he'd have raised the whole street by this time." Tom began to be alarmed himself. "It is a friend," said

Mr B., in a loud whisper at the key hole; for he dared not give his own name, lest he should be overheard, and the singular circumstance of his being seen at Tom's door should injure the poor fellow if it were to be publicly known; for he had long been marked as a smuggler, who was to be strictly watched.

"Well then, I'll take my pistol with me, and if I find it is not a friend, I'll shoot him!" said the naturally good, quiet, and humane Tom Marling! This was a dreadful hearing for Mr Bennet, who might be shot before Tom could recognise him in the street, that was lighted only by the stars! With quick presence of mind, at that moment he bethought himself of slipping a letter, directed to himself, under the door, and whispering through the key hole, "Look at the back of the letter, and you will see who is waiting!" this he did while Tom was lighting a candle, for they had only hitherto talked by fire light, which Marling knew would not give sufficient light for him either to see his danger, or to shun it. They both heard the whisper, and saw the letter; and in another minute a groan, and a heavy fall on the floor, alarmed Mr Bennet; Sally shrieked, and in spite of her rheumatism hobbled to the door, and admitted Mr. B., saying, "Oh, my husband! for mercy's sake, kind sir, help me to raise him!" He had fainted from sheer horror at the thought that he might, in half a minute, have murdered a fellow creature, an innocent person, and his kindest friend!—a very few minutes, however, brought him to himself, and then the poor weak frame of his wife sunk under the anxieties and alarms of this sad

sight: she too revived; and when they had both drunk a little hollands and water, by Mr B.'s advice, which by "*great good chance*" was in their little closet, they listened, fearfully and gratefully, to all that their friend had to disclose. He concluded by saying, "you know my son is young, too young to be entrusted with a secret of this importance; he is too kind-hearted to injure any one intentionally, but it is impossible to say how he might be led to mention the circumstance. I am therefore anxious that you and your partner should go, before day-light, and remove the sack to a safer place. I am sorry, my good fellow, that you still continue this hazardous, this unlawful, this toilsome, anxious business. In what a state of alarm you and your wife must live!"—"Oh, indeed sir, that's true," said she, bursting into tears again. "I am never, never easy about him, whether he is out with the boat, or on shore! The dreadful thought that he may become desperate, commit murder, and be hanged; or be killed in a scuffle by those cruel men, who are always on the look out for him and his partners, keeps me from sleeping at night, and frets my poor life away! Oh, sir, if you could but persuade him to give it over, I should bless you for your goodness!"—"Why sir, so I would," replied the poor fellow, for we have lost so many goods, one way or other, that the trade is hardly worth carrying on; but then, we do clear a little money by it, in spite of seizures, and injuries to the goods from the salt water: but Lord bless you, sir, why now, how do you think I could keep myself, wife, and children, repair my boat and tackle, out of the little pittance that

I gain by fishing only?"—"Oh, Tom," said his wife, better live on potatoes and salt, than have the frights that I have for you. If my mind were easy, I do think I should soon get well; and then I could earn money again by taking in washing; and Bess could help me, she is old enough now; and Jem wants to go for a sailor; and Walter will soon be able to go with you to fish; and only think how few you would then have to work for! Oh do, Tom, give it up!"—"If you will, Tom," added Mr Bennet, "I promise you that your wife shall have the washing of our family, for I heard Mrs Bennet ask a person to-day if she knew of a laundress; your son Walter, too—how old is he?" "He will be eleven, sir, in November."—"Well, he shall come in the place of that idle rascal, Joseph, whom I discharged yesterday; he is to stay three weeks longer; and by that time I hope to take Walter; that is, if you and his mother would like it, you know."—"Like it, sir!" exclaimed the grateful creatures, both at once; "Oh, how can I prove my sense of your goodness to us?" added Tom. "By giving your sick and tender wife the promise she begs of you," replied Mr B. "And so I will, sir, and may God bless you for persuading me to give up a life that I have long been tired of; but which, fear of starvation made me continue. I cannot give the promise yet though," said he, recollecting himself; "you know, sir, I have a partner in the business. That sack, sir, contains shawls, silk dresses, and gloves; it is our last adventure; it is all bespoke; we only wait for a safe conveyance for it to go to Canterbury; we mean to put it in a

coal-sack, and send it at the bottom of a wagon of coals, by a man who has promised to deliver it safely; however, for fear he should be treacherous (for the rewards are so tempting to poor men to betray us) Sam Gunnel means to borrow a coalheaver's hat and smock frock, and go with Tim Higgins. If the plan should succeed, and the goods get safe, I give you, sir, and you, Sal, my word, that I never will engage in any thing of the kind again!" Sally was absolutely too much affected and delighted to utter a word; and Mr Bennet, rejoicing at the favourable result of his exertions, hastily bade them good night, saying that they should soon hear from him again. He hastened out,—and made the best of his way home, to his anxious wife, having met with no interruption; and the worthy man, as he laid his head on his pillow, blessed his God for having allowed him to be the means of bestowing comfort on two of his fellow creatures.

On the following day, dreading lest anything should have occurred to prevent the removal of the sack of smuggled goods from Downton chalk pit, and fearing Robert's firmness in keeping the secret, Mr Bennet determined to send his son to Sandwich on James Grange's pony, which he was allowed to ride whenever he wished; and Joseph, on a hired horse, was to go with Robert to take care of him. Mr Bennet had been, some days before, to purchase a cow of Farmer Haines, at Sandwich, which he was to have sent home on the following evening; it had not arrived, and Mr B. fearing some accident had happened to it, resolved to make use of this circumstance in order to give em-

ployment to his son's thoughts, that they might not dwell on his secret, which was evidently a great trouble to him. The town to which they were going, was between six and seven miles distant from Deal, so they set off before breakfast, that they might have plenty of time to rest during the heat of the day.

Soon after they had left home, Joe cried out, "Oh, master Robert! hark! Don't you hear the Foxley hounds? Tom Bugle is exercising them in the grounds at Downton Hall; shall we just take a gallop round and see them? it won't be above a couple of miles out of the way; and it will be so pleasant to run on the downs, instead of on this dusty road!"—"Oh, yes; I should like to see them very much," replied Robert: and away they scudded over the short smooth turf for nearly a mile, when suddenly the "Old Thorn" came in sight: Robert involuntarily checked his poney." "Is this the way to Downton Hall?" asked he.—"Yes, sir; when we get a hundred yards beyond the chalk pit, we shall be at the top of this part of the downs, and you will see the large house and grounds that belong to Mr Hornby; the little villages of Foxley and Downton lie in the bottom, and then the hills rise very high out away towards the South Foreland." Robert heard not a word, so suddenly and painfully were all his thoughts employed in retracing the scene of the preceding evening, and wondering what should make his father so certain that the men were only smugglers. He was at last roused by finding that they were at the very edge of the pit, and by hearing Joe ask him if he had never been there before. It was a very natural

question; but poor Robert was so taken by surprise, and was so fearful of forfeiting his father's confidence, that he turned as red as crimson, then as pale as death, said "Yes," "No"—"I don't know"—"I believe not," as fast as the words could flow from his lips. Joseph thought he appeared very strange, but he made no remark; and as they turned their horses' heads to leave it, he said, "You know about the murder that was committed, don't you, master Robert? The face and terrified voice with which he asked, "when? where?" almost frighted Joe, who replied, "Why, in the cave; there—that cave, nearly under that bush, two smugglers killed a man, put him in a sack, then dug a hole and buried him."—"Oh! it's all true then; I knew it was!!"—"What sir?"—"Oh! the dreadful murder! Why, papa and I saw them ourselves last evening; and now it's so well known, there is no occasion for me to keep the secret!" added he, trembling and holding by the mane of his pony. "Ha! ha! ha! ha!" shouted Joseph, "well that's a good one!—last night! why, it happened nine years ago!!"—"When?" said Robert in amazement.—"Why, nine years last May, two smugglers were hiding some goods; it was a foggy evening, and a poor pedlar or hawker, with his pack of goods over his shoulder, was going across country, and could not see the pit for the fog, so he fell over the side of the cliff, just by the mouth of the cave; and his fall, as well as his pack, made such a noise, that the two men thought they were discovered and were going to be taken; so they snatched up their cutlasses, ran out, tumbled over the poor fellow, stabbed him, put him in

an empty sack, and buried him; one of them died about two years ago, and told it: so the other left the country."—"Oh, what have I done!" thought poor Robert; "How can I ever look my father in the face again, after being such a weak fool! how shall I keep Joe from telling what I have said? I must try and turn it off! Bless me, Joe," said he to the boy, "what a strange story! and what a stupid fellow you must have thought me, to say that *I* saw that which was done before we came into the country!"—"Why, it was queer of you, to be sure, master Robert!" replied the lad thoughtfully. They found from a boy whom they met, that the hounds were kennelled; so they turned their horses to the right, regained the Sandwich road, and scarcely exchanged another word till they arrived at Farmer Haines's.

Having refreshed themselves and their horses, delivered their message, and seen the cow, which had been kept because Mr Haines's man had hurt his leg; these two boys once more mounted their nags, and in nearly the same state of silence and reserve, they reached home. Robert hastily told his father all that related to the cow, complained of a headache, not without reason! and requested to go to bed. Mr Bennet saw by his son's pale anxious countenance, that something had gone wrong; but he would not ask any questions to distress the poor boy, who could scarcely speak for tears. He was suffered to go to bed, where he spent the most wretched night he had ever passed. The many hours that went heavily by before he could close his wakeful eyes, were consumed in repentance and anger against

his own folly: in pity and conjecture respecting poor Tom Marling, whose life he had probably (he thought) endangered. When, as morning dawned over the sharp outlines of the calm sea and quiet town, he closed his weary eyes, his troubled thoughts then formed themselves into frightful dreams, in which Tom, his sick wife, and helpless little ones; prisons, cutlasses, chalk pits, Joseph, the raging sea, and his father's sorrowful eye turned *ever* upon him, crowded in endless and wearying confusion. He awoke; and a sensation of real delight came over him, to find the cheerful sun, the blue sky, and the neat solitude of his own pretty bed-room all about him; the comfort lasted but a minute, and he jumped out of bed, not only lest he should sleep and dream again, but because he hoped that by employing himself, he should get rid of thought. If he had been three times his present age, he could not have chosen a more sensible and likely remedy for sad reflections and a heavy heart, than that which he now put in practice.

Joseph, in the mean time, had not been unemployed. His young master's wild looks, strange expressions, and subsequent (that is, after) silence, convinced him that he knew of, or had witnessed something that he evidently wished to conceal, though what it was he could hardly let himself think of. He was an idle lad, consequently he had companions who made him worse; and to one of these, (Jack Snaffle by name) the under ostler at the 'Crown Inn,' he resolved to tell all he had heard. On their return from Sandwich the preceding evening, Joe was desired to take the horses

home; James Grange's pony, with 'Mr Bennet's respects and thanks,' and the hired horse back to the 'Crown.' Jack was lolling against the gate post, whistling, and cracking green hazle nuts, in the almost vain hope of finding kernels larger than a pin's head. He knew 'Shuffleton's' step as Joe rode him down the street at a sharp trot, eager to see his worthy 'chum.' —"Holloa! what's old Shuffleton running away with you, Joe?" shouted he, as the rider pulled up and received a handful of nutshells in his face. "Oh, Jack! I'm so glad you are at home, come in to the stable, I want to tell you something." The mysterious affair was soon communicated; Jack could make out nothing certain; but proposed that they should both go off directly to Downton chalk pit, and see if the earth appeared to be fresh disturbed, or if they could find any other traces of persons having been there lately. Idle curiosity was the only motive that induced Jack Snaffle to search into the matter, but Joe had a worse; he was vexed at being discharged from a good place, and hoped, that if he should discover any thing that might corroborate (that is, prove) Robert's strange assertion, he could bring Mr Bennet into trouble, and thereby be revenged; assuredly it was no wish to bring murderers to justice, that induced these boys to busy themselves. However, off they went, and a famous run they had over the turf to the celebrated chalk pit. The sun had not long set, and there was yet light enough when they arrived, for them to explore the cave, which they did very carefully. They soon ascertained that the earth had been very recently moved; they also

found the beautiful bit of sea-weed that had adorned Tom Marling's hat, and which had fallen out unobserved the previous evening; but better than that to Joe's bad heart, Robert's little gold brooch with his mother's hair in it, lay underneath the thorn; one of its branches had caught it as he stooped eagerly over to watch the scene in the cave, and had twitched it out of his shirt, unheeded by him at the time, though he had since missed it, and wondered where he could have lost it. "Well, Joe, we have found enough to prove that your young master is in the mess, but I can't think who the men were!" said Jack; when, just as he spoke, he kicked against something that had been covered over with mould, which he found to be the head, or top part, of the wooden handle of a spade; and which on bringing to the light, they found had letters on it burnt in; as it was broken, part of the name was wanting, but that which remained was sufficient; they saw—'*arling*'—quite distinct. "This wants but an '*M*,' said Jack," for it to tell a pretty plain tale. I thought that fellow would get hanged with his smuggling before long; now, if he has killed any one, he's in for it, sure enough! —come, let us go. Now I would advise you, Joe, to go before a magistrate, and swear to all you have told me, and show these things; Lord! what a row there will be to-morrow. 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good,' so I shall come in for two or three shillings, any how; for there, they will be committed to Dover Castle, you know, as sure as a gun; and they must be sent in post chaises; so I shall somehow or other pick up my pence, and make a neat day's work of it! Come, I'll

treat you to a pint of beer, or even a glass of brandy if you like, I'm in such hopes of my luck to-morrow." Away they both ran again; and Joe (after being fortified with his dram) turned his steps to the house of Mr Wallace the worthy magistrate. That gentleman heard the boy's tale with surprise, and took his deposition in silence. Mr Bennet's family were all at breakfast the next morning, when Mr Wallace was announced. He was shown into the drawing room, where Mr B. joined him; and to his utter astonishment, the servant boy's story, that strange mixture of truth, falsehood, malice, and conjecture, was related to him. The gentlemen were well known to each other, and had the highest mutual esteem. Mr Wallace had chosen to depart from his usual method of conducting his official business, because he was confident there could be no truth in the monstrous assertion, that a man of Mr Bennet's known uprightness and respectability, should witness a murder, and keep the affair secret. "This will be a dreadful warning to my poor boy!" were the first words that Mr B. uttered after Mr Wallace ceased speaking. He then told Mr W. that as the affair had become in a degree public, he should wish, although he had the greatest reluctance to make himself conspicuous (that is, much noticed), he should wish to go through with it. "I must beg to defer, therefore, my dear sir, saying any thing to you privately on the subject; send for me, my son, and servant boy, in the usual official manner." Mr Wallace took leave, and Mr Bennet returned into the breakfast-room. Robert had left the table, and was gone up stairs; Mr B. there-

fore told his wife and daughter the cause of Mr Wallace's early visit, and desired them to say nothing of it to Robert. They were much shocked at the circumstance of Mr B.'s being obliged to appear in a court of justice; but he bade them consider how much more they would have been distressed, if his character had been such as to reflect any discredit upon them. Robert here returned, and the subject was dropped. In about an hour, a constable came to the house to desire that Mr Bennet, his son, and his servant boy, Joseph Simson, would accompany him to the justice room. Robert felt as if he should have died when he heard the summons! They all went; the court was crowded when they got there, and all kinds of falsehoods were afloat. As Mr Bennet passed along the lines of persons, he found himself by Tom Marling, who whispered "All's well, sir!" which cheered him exceedingly. Mr Wallace soon after appeared. Joseph Simson was first called on to repeat all he knew of the transaction, which he did, but with evident reluctance, for he began to be ashamed of his motive. Mr Bennet was then desired to say what he had observed, but he begged his son might state his account first; the poor boy, however, was found to be too much agitated to speak: his father then in a clear calm voice, mentioned the circumstances of their walk—the chalk pit—the two men (concealing, of course, their names)—the sack —and his son's silly fears that they were murderers. "And how could you tell that they were not?"—Because I knew the men, and had no more reason to suppose they would be guilty of such a crime, than I should."

A constable here held up the sea-weed, the broken spade handle, and Robert's brooch. Several in the crowd knew the handle and the weed to belong to Tom Marling, and he was desired to come forward. He came with a smiling countenance. "What have you to say for yourself, Tom?" "The spade is mine! and I used it in the cave of Downton chalk pit, the night before last." Here a murmur was heard in the room, for some evidently thought he had committed the deed! when Mr Wallace observed, "We shall soon hear what use he made of the spade; for two officers are sent to the spot to dig the whole of the cave, and to bring word—— but here they are;" and the two men stood before him. "Well, what have you found?" Nothing, sir! there were no signs of a murder having been committed, nor any thing but the fresh turned mould for us to judge that any one had been there lately." Poor Robert began to breathe more freely. "Well, Tom, we have no proof against you as a murderer, but I should like to know why Mr Bennet's son spoke so positively to the lad Joseph Simson; perhaps the young gentleman can speak now." Robert, encouraged by his father, gathered confidence and stated all he saw, all he felt, and all he said. The manner in which the tale of the murdered pedlar had been told him, and his naturally referring it to the scene which had so terrified him the preceding evening, together with his anxiety to keep the secret which his father had so anxiously enjoined him to do, were not lost on Mr Wallace, and he showed that they were not. He then turned again to Tom, and said, "You can have

no objection, Marling, to clear your character from the suspicion that has been thrown upon it; and the best way for you to do it, will be to state for what purpose you and your companion were in the chalk pit on Tuesday evening."—Certainly, sir," replied Tom; "and I'll tell you how it was. I know that I am 'a marked man;' I know that you, sir, and all here have long considered me to be a smuggler; and a smuggler I have been; but you do not know that I have given up the trade; and, please God I can keep my resolution and my word, I shall never become again an unlawful trader, as it is called, as long as I live! I have, therefore, no objection to tell your worship how it happened that I was in the chalk pit. We had landed our fishing smack on Monday night, between this place and Walmer, in order to bring our cargo of contraband goods ashore, to hide them in a place which we considered safe and secret, and which we had often used for the same purpose before. We hoped to get it all done in an hour, that we might put out to sea before dawn, in order to escape observation, and so scud into Deal, with fish only, after day-light. As ill luck would have it, however, our motions were watched, by one of the 'look out' fellows, who ought to have been about something more to his credit than watching his fellow countrymen, with a gun in his hand, ready to shoot them for following a trade which they are brought up to; and which is less cruel and blood-thirsty than his, at any rate!"

"Tom," said the magistrate, "they are officers on duty, and employed by his Majesty's government:—

recollect where you are."—" I beg pardon, sir, but I always get hot when I think or talk of those fellows! Well, sir, as ill luck would have it, this chap spied us out, and seeing us, at nightfall, make for the beach, he hid himself behind an old jetty, a few paces from us. We had just hauled our vessel out of reach of the breakers, when we spied his white face over the black planks of the jetty; and, not knowing but half a dozen more of them might be skulking there; we tumbled into the boat again; and with our eyes fixed on him, and ' all hands aloft' to put her off, we felt ourselves riding the high breakers once more:—truer friends have they been to me, with all their fury, than my own fellow countrymen! Well, please your worship, to make short of a long story, our fears that he had comrades with him, I mean our foe behind the breakwater, of course, were soon over; for they would have been glad enough to take a pop or two at us, if only to show their courage, and to boast of it! but we could not tell but they might watch our coming into Deal, in the morning, and seize our goods; so we stood out to the S.S.E. for a couple of hours, and then boldly ran in home: the night was dark, and we landed our cargo. I carried all to my own house, and frightened my poor Sal almost out of the little life she has left;"—he here passed his hand hastily over his eyes, and then continued; " I only staid while I lifted up a board under our bed, and pushed the gay silks in, as I would tumble a haul of fish into a basket,—bid her cheer up,—and got back to the boat: the breeze and darkness still favoured us; we stood out towards the gull stream,

caught a goodish lot of soles, and ran in again, about 8 o'clock, as if nothing had been amiss. My wife, in the mean time, was so frightened at the thought of having the 'look out gemmen,' in the house, that she sent to her brother, an honest farmer (who would never join us in our trade, though he was always ready to help us, if we got into trouble) to come to speak to her. 'Wel, Sall,' said he, 'Tom's been at his old work again, I suppose!'—'Oh, Will,' said she, 'don't be talking, but pray help us! Now, do get a sack, and cram these fine troubles in, and take it, as if it was beans, or bran, or corn, or something of that sort: no one will suspect you!'—'I expect to get into trouble, Sal, one of these times,' said he, 'and I tell you, now, though I'm sorry too, to do it, but I've a wife and family as well as Tom, and I must think of them; I tell you then, this is the last time I will ever lend my hand to what I cannot think right of.' Well, he took the things, and told Sal he would put them in the dark part of Downton chalk pit (he had often done so before for us) and bid her tell me to go and bury them, till 'the storm was blown over.' My companion and I went in the evening and buried the sack;—the rest you know;—but you don't know why we removed them: we had reason to fear that the spot was not quite so safe as it had been; so again we went, before sun-rise, and carried them to a fresh place; and now, please your worship, they are too far off for my power, or even yours, to bring them back."

Mr Wallace made but little reply to this long and faithful account, but waited till the crowd had dis-

persed. When he found that only Tom, Mr. Bennet, and his son remained, he said, " Tom, I am rejoiced to find you have given up your late unlawful trade. I could not, as I am situated (that is, being a magistrate, whose duty it is to punish those who transgress the laws) I could not encourage one who openly did so; though I have long had my eye upon you, and have honoured every other part of your life; now the case is altered; you are no longer, you tell me, an unlawful trader; and, to prove that I am sincere in my good wishes for your future success, as well as to encourage you to keep your resolution, I give you a guinea, and I promise to be your friend, as far as lies in my power. If I do not mistake, you have a firm friend here too (looking at Mr. Bennet) you are a fortunate man! If all smugglers, who would fain 'turn from the error of their ways,' had the encouragement to do so that you have met with, we should find that government need not incur (addressing Mr Bennet) the enormous expense that the preventive service costs it." Mr Bennet bowed in reply merely; for Tom's grateful thanks could wait only till Mr Wallace ceased speaking, before they burst out in a flow of eloquence. " Ah, sir," said he, after thanking the magistrate, " I owe all my good resolutions to this kind friend!" and he looked at Mr B. with tears in his eyes. " He has saved me, perhaps, from the gallows; my wife and children from starvation; he came to warn me of the danger of leaving the sack in Downton chalk pit; he advised me to give up my hazardous occupation; oh, how can I be grateful enough to him and to you, sir, for your goodness! Truly do

you say that there are many would leave this weary anxious life, had they any other to turn their hands to, that would provide food for their families. I know many. Perhaps, sir, if you were to represent the case to government, something better might be done to prevent smuggling, than paying Englishmen to hunt down like dogs,—wound, imprison, ruin and destroy—fellow subjects, and honest men!"

Mr Wallace shook his head, and turned away to attend to other business. Having despatched the man who came with a message, the magistrate again turned to the groupe beside him, and addressing the sorrow-stricken Robert, held out his hand to him and said, "If any thing could excuse your want of secrecy, it was the very singular circumstances in which you were placed, and being thrown off your guard by the tale which was told you. I have seen much of human nature; I listened attentively to your account of the story; and I must say that I have the firmest belief in your future caution and resolution to be faithful and secret, where secrecy is desirable!"

Robert shook the worthy man's hand warmly and gratefully, then looking up at his father's anxious countenance, burst into tears. Mr B. was much affected. "Yes, my dear fellow, I will forgive you! your punishment has been severe enough, and I do believe with Mr Wallace, that your fault is now cured. God bless you!" added he, as he shook the agitated boy's other hand affectionately. "Mr Bennet," said the magistrate, "we have hitherto known but little of each other, will you excuse all formalities; I am not a young

man, and do not place much value on them: will you bring your son in your hand, and dine with me to-day? I have a boy, about his own age, and the novelty of their new acquaintance will help to wear off the deep impression,—the grief (added he, in a whisper) that your son suffers. To-morrow, Mrs Wallace and my daughter Ann, will be happy to call and make acquaintance with Mrs and Miss Bennet." The friendly manner in which this was offered, gratified both father and son: they thanked him, promised to come, and took leave.

Mr Bennet slipped a five pound note into poor Tom Marling's hand, to buy a *good resolution*, as he said, laughing. "Oh, sir, there's no need to fear that I shall ever be tempted to forget what you have saved me from! Oh, how happy will my poor Sal be when she hears all that has happened this morning! God reward you, sir, for your great goodness to me and mine!"—"Good morning, Tom, good morning," said Mr B. and Robert, and away they went to Castle Terrace.

The two families were much pleased with each other. The great good sense and uprightness of character that Mr Wallace discovered in his new friend, delighted the magistrate; whose more polished manners and cultivated mind were equally admired by the worthy Mr Bennet. It was a fresh character for each to study.

Joe was gone; and little Walter Marling was brought into a new world, to learn the art of cleaning knives and blacking shoes. They were "*arts*" indeed to him; and as difficult to be acquired as the more polite "arts

and sciences" are, to boys in higher life. Perseverance and good temper will do much; and, in less than a month, no complaint was heard of Walter's awkwardness. He had not much to do, and he did that little well. Jem, his elder brother, became his father's constant companion, instead of Sam Gunnel, on the perilous sea; poor Sally, with kind nursing and an easy mind, gradually recovered her health; her eldest girl assisted her in washing; Mrs Grange and Mrs Wallace, as well as the Bennet family, employed her; and every thing at Deal appeared to be going on well. Michaelmas was approaching, and Fanny and Robert were making preparations to leave their happy home and pleasant young friends. By Mr Wallace's advice, they were to return, "for good," at the following summer vacation, and receive instructions at home, in the same way that George and Ann Wallace, as well as many other young persons did.

One morning Fanny went into the kitchen, to iron out a French white sash, which was going to be packed up, to take to school; she found Susan crying violently. "Goodness! what's the matter?" said she.—"Oh, miss Fanny! such dreadful news!" replied the girl; "Jem Sykes has just been over, to tell me that my sister Mary, who has been married to Ben Surge only seven months, is so bad, they don't expect her life! Ben, you see, miss, belongs to a company of smugglers; and so Mary, you know, miss, used to take the silks, and gloves, and lace to different ladies who know her, and she used to have large false pockets inside of her petticoats; and sometimes she has had as much as

fifty pounds worth of lace wound round her body, under her gown; and so, yesterday,—no, the day before, she went over to Ramsgate, to a lady that had bespoke some lace; and so, the lady bought some; but she was such a wicked tiger (for I can't call her any thing else) that she informed the lieutenant of the "look out" who is on that station; and as poor Mary was coming home again, all by herself, in the evening, about half way between Sandwich and Walmer, three men rushed out of a lone cottage by the way side, and dragged her into the hut; and one of their wives came, and searched her, and took from her all the goods that she had not sold;—forty pounds worth!—and she was so terrified that she fainted away; and they only stayed to recover her, and then went away, and left her. Well miss, poor Mary, after they were gone, got up and crawled out of the cottage, to try and get home; but she could not! every noise made her think it was the men coming back to murder her; so she fainted again: and there she might have laid till now, if Jem Sykes—(he's a *very* good young man, and very quiet, and every body speaks well of Jem, miss; he and I have been acquainted these six months) if Jem had not been going over to Sandwich, to buy a pair of shoes;—so, what does he see lying by the road side but a woman, and who should that be but poor Mary! Well, miss, you may be sure he was frightened enough! he thought she was dead! so he took her up, and carried her near a mile, and then she stirred; and he came to a brook, so he laid her down, and threw some water over her face, and she opened her eyes: but she did not know

him, and could not walk. Well, just then, a cart came by, and so they lifted her in, and brought her home; and she never came to her senses till last night: and Ben only came home in the evening, and Dick Grapple was with him; and so, they both swore they would be the death of those three villains who had frightened her so, for they knew who they were; and Mary heard them swear, in the next room, and it *upset* her again, and now they are obliged to have the doctor, and they don't think she'll live! and I want to ask your mamma, miss Fanny, if she'll let me go home and see her."

The poor girl had not told all this without many interruptions from sobbing and crying. Fanny bid her hope the best, and she would go and ask her mamma to give her leave. Away she ran, and told her dismal story to pitying ears. "By all means; tell her not to wait for anything; I can hire a person to do her work," said Mrs Bennet; and said Mr B. "I will go over and talk to Ben; I was of use to poor Tom, and I may be to him, though not in the same way; for I hear he is a determined smuggler, and says 'if he is hacked to bits and put in jail twenty times, they shall never stop him from smuggling, unless they quite kill him; for he don't see what right any men have to prevent him from getting his bread in an honest way; he pays lawful money for the goods, and sells them at a fair price; and if that is not honesty, what is?' With such a violent man," continued Mr B. "I should not expect to succeed, if I were to try and persuade him to give up his unlawful trade; but I may be so fortunate as to convince him of the folly and wickedness of taking

away the life of three of his fellow creatures (as he has threatened to do), and who were in their duty." He took his hat and stick, desired Robert to go with him, and away they went to Walmer; they arrived at Ben Surge's in a very few minutes after Susan, found Mary better, because her husband had half promised that he would not seek the lives of the men who had illtreated her; but he had only said this to quiet his wife, and Mr Bennet found him obstinate. However, he had the pleasure of finding (after half an hour's kind, mild, and persuasive conversation with him) that he was inclined to listen to reason; and before he returned home, Mr B. received his word of honour—it was better than his oath—that he never would seek out the men to assault them. This, of course, he told poor Mary, who thanked him gratefully for his kindness; and he left Walmer with his son, who was now the happiest boy in the world. He was cured of his only fault, and gave every promise of realising his father's fondest hopes, and of exemplifying the worthy man's favourite line in Pope:—

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

THE

CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE.

TALE THE SECOND.

THE SHIPWRECK.

Mr and Mrs Clement lived for some time after they were married, in London; but Mr C.'s concerns requiring his presence at Calcutta, in the East Indies, he was obliged to leave his wife and two children, and to bear alone the dangers and fatigues of a sea voyage. His wife would gladly have gone with him, but her little girl was too young to leave this country and travel so far to another, which is considered unhealthy for children; her mother would have left her with her aunt, but Mr Clement would not hear of little Charlotte being deprived of her mother's care. He assured his wife he would hasten his affairs as much as possible, and return to her by the next homeward bound fleet; or if they could not be settled so speedily, he would send for her and his dear children over. Mrs Clement was obliged to comply with this arrangement; and

with grief she saw him depart. William and Charlotte were too young to feel the loss of their good father; but they were old enough to remember him, and their mother impressed on their minds continually every circumstance relating to him. By the time that the homeward bound fleet was expected (which was nearly a year after Mr Clement left England) Mrs C. had made arrangements to take her children over to Calcutta, in the event of her husband's writing for them to join him there; but she hoped these arrangements would be rendered unnecessary by his arrival in England: she was disappointed:—he wrote,—but it was to request her *not* to come; for he thought it a pity that she should encounter the trouble, fatigue, anxiety, and danger of a voyage, as she would have to stay so short a time in the East Indies, for he fully expected to be home in another year. Mrs Clement shed many tears over this cruel disappointment; but she knew that her husband was right, and she tried to feel satisfied. Her children were now becoming delightful companions for her; William was nine, and Charlotte eight years of age; they loved one another dearly, but their affection for their kind mother was very great; and she deserved all they could feel for her; in the absence of their father, they were her constant companions; she devoted her time to their instruction and amusement, and they wished for no other playfellow than their mother.

The next year, alas! poor Mrs Clement was doomed to endure a more severe trial, for one of the ships, on its passage home was lost,—and in that vessel was

either Mr Clement, or a letter from him: and his wife was obliged to bear this terrible suspense for twelve long months! At last May, with its sweet flowers and cheerful breezes, came again, and May was to bring her intelligence of some sort. She had taken a house a few weeks before, a short distance from London; for alarm on Mr Clement's account had injured her health; and her friends thought that change of scene and fresh country air, would revive and be of service to her. One sweet morning, towards the middle of the month, the children had enticed her into a pretty field belonging to the house, to look at their dog Neptune, whom they had dressed up with wild flowers in garlands; their little hearts were free from the care that weighed upon their mother's; but their joyous shouts of laughter and delight as the playful Neptune frisked off his pretty load, and trailed it after him as he ran, drew a smile to her pale face: she had so seldom been seen to smile of late, that the children could not fail to notice this; and concluding Neptune's frolics were the cause, they raced after him to deck him out afresh. A servant was coming in from the garden, with a letter in her hand; and the dog, half wild with the fun he was enjoying, jumped up and snatched it from the girl's hand; then, as if he had known who it was for, and the happy news it contained, he went bounding to Mrs Clement, and laid it at her feet; she knew the handwriting, and soon found that all her fears and anxieties had been without a cause, for her dear husband was well, and as he saw no prospect of coming home for many months,

he had at last determined to write for his wife and children to come over without delay to India. This was delightful news to the children; they had no idea of any thing but pleasure in the voyage, and soon forgot all their games but those that related in some way to the East Indies; they had heard their mother talk of persons there being carried about in palanquins, so they contrived a chair fastened on two poles, with a table cloth tied round for curtains, to represent a palanquin, then, with the assistance of the gardener, and the good-natured William, Charlotte was borne about the garden, like an Indian princess. Mrs Clement had taught the children to be useful; they therefore did not pass all their time in playing, they assisted their mother in packing, and reminded her of many little things that she would have forgotten; and they saw, with wonder and delight, their own new stock of clothes put into trunks, ready to be sent on board the vessel: light nankin suits for William and thin muslins for Charlotte. By October, all was arranged for their departure; they had bid their friends farewell, and accompanied by their aunt and uncle (Mr and Miss Ireton) and their servant, Mary, who had lived many years with Mrs C., they set off for Portsmouth to go on board the East Indiaman called "the Tippoo Saib:" of course Neptune was not left behind; he was so great a favourite with the whole family, that they could not think of going without him.

On the journey they found the weather cool, and Charlotte begged she might have her warm pelisse on; "Mamma," said she, "this is getting too small for me;

I think while you were buying me so many pretty new summer clothes, it was a pity you did not think to buy winter ones too; for we shall be all the cold weather going over to Calcutta, shan't we?"—"Have you forgotten, my love," replied her mother, "that we are going to a hot climate, and do you expect that we shall have cold weather till we get there, and that it will become hot all at once?"—"Ah, true, I had forgotten it, mamma; but somehow I feel as if all I have learnt of geography, and all I have heard of India was only a lesson; not as if it were real; and I can hardly believe that I am going away from England."—"Do you not wish to go then?" said her mother. "Oh yes, dear mamma; even if I did not wish to see poor papa, and if I did not like to see the sea, I should still wish to go to be with you." Her mother kissed her, and thought with delight what good and amiable children her husband would find them. When the travellers came in view of the sea, the young people were too much astonished to speak: they had seen no larger piece of water than the Thames, at London bridge, and the shipping there, so crowded together, gave them but a poor idea of the beautiful sight that was now displayed before them. A fine breeze filled the sails of the vessels, that were gliding about in the sunshine, like living creatures; the Isle of Wight looked like a fairy island, which, though seven miles from Portsmouth, appeared so near, that the sea between was like a strip of blue ribbon laid along. It was a glorious sight; not only did it delight William and Charlotte, but their mother, and Mr and Miss Ireton, who had often been on

the coast before. Their uncle reminded his sisters of Shakespeare's beautiful lines, in his play of King Henry the Fifth.

> ". . . . behold the threaden sails,
> Borne with th' invisible and creeping wind,
> Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea,
> Breasting the lofty surge."

William listened, but could not quite understand the meaning of these lines; and Mr Ireton told him, that when he came back to England, he would be nearly old enough to understand some of Shakespeare's works, and that he was sure he would like them; "how old are you now, William!" — "I was ten last March, uncle," said he, "and Charlotte was nine in the same month." — "In a year or two, then, we shall think about Shakespeare," replied his uncle. Just then they entered Portsmouth, and were quickly driven to the inn where they were to sleep: they were all fatigued, and soon went to bed.

Early the next morning, the whole party were up and looking about them, and as Mr Ireton had ascertained that the India fleet were only waiting for a fair wind, they were obliged to be in perfect readiness to set off when the wind changed, and as that might happen before night, they were obliged to see every thing worth notice in the town on that day.

It was fortunate for them that they had made so good use of their time, for the next morning, just before it was light, their kind aunt came into their rooms to call them; the captain had sent a boat ashore from the 'Tippoo Saib,' to bring all the passengers who were

not already on board; the wind was fair, and no time was to be lost. Miss Ireton was in tears, and the children for the first time felt that a voyage to the East Indies was not all pleasure. They loved their aunt, and, as if they they had now first been told that they were to be separated from her, they cried bitterly. She kissed them tenderly, and told them she should long for their return to England; then giving them each a little parcel wrapped up in brown paper, she desired them not to unpack their presents till they were on board ship, but make all the haste they could, and come to their mamma. They wondered what their aunt had given them, but lost no time in dressing themselves, and soon joined Mrs Clement. Their uncle and aunt would go with them to the ship, and they soon found themselves on that unsteady ocean upon which they were to float for many, many weeks. As they approached the 'Tippoo Saib,' which was at anchor off St Helen's Point, they were amazed at the enormous size of the vessel; the children wondered, too, how they were to get up into it, and were much amused to see a chair let down the side of it into the boat. William was sent up first, and Mrs Clement, and Charlotte, and Mary, soon followed; Neptune scrambled up a ladder of ropes, to the great delight of the children and sailors. The ship was getting under weigh, that means, was setting off, and they watched the little boat in which their kind friends were returning to land, till they could no longer see it for their tears.

Mr Ireton, when he kissed the children at parting, had also put two little parcels into their hands; so to

divert them from their grief, their mother proposed to go down into the cabin and open them. William found a handsome watch in the parcel his aunt had given him; and most delighted he was, you may be sure, to have a real gold watch of his own, with a pretty blue ribbon, key, and seal, with 'Though lost to sight, to memory dear,' engraved on it! His uncle's kind remembrance was 'Robinson Crusoe,' and 'Robertson's History of America,' two delightful books that William had never read. Charlotte also found books to entertain her in the parcel her uncle gave her at parting; they were Miss Edgeworth's three sets of the Story of 'Rosamond;' 'Mrs Leicester's School;' and an abridgment (that means, a large work made small) of Captain Cook's Voyages. Her aunt's present was a pretty pearl brooch, with Mr and Miss Ireton's hair in it. They were not weary of looking at these beautiful things for a long, long time; but at length their mother advised them to put the books away with the others that were bought for their amusement on the voyage, and then they all went on deck. The breeze had increased as the sun got higher, and the vessel had sailed so fast that the shore looked quite small, and the next day they were out of sight of land. In a week or two, the children began to be tired of the confinement of the ship, they longed to see something besides sky and water. The captain, whose name was Campbell, was a very kind, sensible man, and was fond of William and Charlotte, they behaved so well. He contrived many little plans for their amusement; sometimes a boat was let down for them in calm weather, that they

might fish; and a good-natured sailor named Tom Starboard, was always ready to assist and to please them; still they longed for the voyage to be at an end, before they had got half way to Calcutta. Under his friend Tom's instructions, William soon began to climb the ropes well; and he used to climb up and down to his sister's great delight. The weather now began to get very warm, though had they been still in England they would have found it quite cold. One day, William, who had been up to the mast head, saw land; he was so delighted that he came scrambling down, and flew into the cabin to tell his mother and sister they should soon see dear papa, for the East Indies was in sight! Mrs Clement smiled, but she sighed too; for she knew they could not be near the end of their voyage, as they had not 'doubled the cape,' which is a sea term that means going round the Cape of Good Hope.

On enquiring of the captain, William heard that they were within sight of the island of St Helena; to his great delight, he found they were to land, and Mrs Clement and Charlotte were soon informed that they were to change the scene by going on shore. The next morning the ship came to her moorings, and a boat was sent off from the vessel with as many passengers as chose to land. Our little party were pleased with the appearance of James Town, the capital of the island; it is situated to the south, between two high mountains covered with wood. The sight of green trees after so long an absence from verdure, was a treat to them that no one can imagine, but those who have been in

the same situation. A store of fresh water, fowls, sheep, and fruit, was brought to the Tippoo Saib, and after a few days they again set sail. William and Charlotte had read all their books over and over again; they had, in short, tried every plan to amuse themselves, and found nothing please them so much as fishing; for as they could only fish in calm weather and cloudy days it was always new to them, and they enjoyed it more than if they could have amused themselves with it whenever they chose. Once, with Tom's assistance, they caught a flying fish just as it was preparing to escape by flight from a dolphin that was pursuing it. The fins of this singular fish serve it for wings; it has many enemies in the water, and indeed in the air also; for it has no sooner taken to flight, than birds of various kinds are prepared to devour it: many other species of fish they found too, that are not known in Europe. One day, the children were sitting on deck listening to Tom, who was amusing them with some of his adventures, when they were astonished at the appearance of a very large bird that came towards them flapping his long wings, and searching for food. Tom told them it was 'a man-of-war bird, or wandering Albatross.' It came so near the vessel, that the young people could see its keen eye and ferocious looking beak, as it quietly sailed about. They saw that its plumage was nearly white, but was marked on the back and wings with black lines. One of the sailors shot at, and killed it; but as the flesh is strong and unpleasant, they did not attempt to eat it. They now came in sight of land again, which was the high moun-

tain near the Cape of good Hope, called the Table Mountain. The captain had dispatches, which means letters, to send on shore, and when they were delivered, the 'Tippoo Saib' got under weigh once more. Soon afterwards they began to experience bad stormy weather; they had hitherto had a wonderfully fine passage. In weathering the Cape, vessels generally meet with storms, but as some times of the year are worse than others, the India fleets always contrive, if possible, to go round that point of land at the finest time of the year. They next passed the south east part of the island of Madagascar, and sailed slowly with contrary winds, which soon sank into a dead calm. The air (for there was not a breath stirring) was hot, and moist, and close, and heavy; the swell of the sea from the late winds had subsided, and all around, the water was as smooth as glass, and of the colour of lead: though the sun did not shine, owing to the thick black clouds that hung about the sky, the heat was so intense that the ship's crew could hardly perform their duty; they lay about the deck like logs. Mrs Clement and the children suffered extremely, and in this dismal state they continued for three days and three nights; the dead silence all about them was dreadful; not a living creature moved; no birds, no fish were to be seen; not a ripple was in the sea; not a rope or a sail stirred; not even an insect buzzed about the melancholy spot! Persons on land can have no idea of this awful stillness; and captain Campbell said, he never had witnessed so dreary and durable a calm. "I fear," added he to Mrs Clement, "it precedes a fearful storm; we always

notice that calms come before storms." In the night the wind rose suddenly, and though it was wild and moaning, the sound was delightful. In the morning when the children went on deck, what a different sight there was! The sea looked alive, and as if the waves had broken loose from the power that had chained them; they dashed their angry heads against the parched sides of the ship; the shapeless clouds were hurrying over the sky in frightful groups, as if flying from some pursuer; the ropes were shaking, the sails flapping, the sailors bustling, the captain walking with rapid steps about the vessel; and in short, every thing was changed. The wind continued to increase the whole day, and by sunset it had arisen to a dreadful gale. They caught a glimpse of the captain as he was hastening to and fro giving orders about the sails, and he looked anxiously: this terrified Mrs Clement, who judged that they had to pass another awful night, but how different a one from the last! The noise was now even more awful than the silence of the night before; the thunder rolled, the rain fell in sheets, the vessel tossed and pitched on the monstrous billows, so that the passengers could not stand, and were obliged to hold by the furniture that was fixed in the cabins, or they would have fallen. Each hour as it passed increased the terrors of the storm; the ship was quite unmanageable, and they expected every moment she would strike on some rock, for they had no means of knowing where they were. The children, of course, were greatly terrified, but seeing their mother so alarmed, they tried to comfort her. About midnight they felt a violent shock,

and the next instant a loud cry was heard, 'She has struck!' It was now unsafe for them to stay in the cabin, they all rushed upon deck, and there beheld the most awful sight that can be imagined! By the flashes of lightning they saw the sad effects of the storm; the waves were dashing over the vessel with a dreadful roar, frequently washing some poor creature away into the gulf below; some of the sailors were on their knees praying, others running about half wild; and some few were getting the boats out, in order to try and save themselves when the ship should sink. The large tall monument that the children had so often looked up at with admiration and wonder, was snapped like a stick, and the upper part lay rolling with every heave of the vessel, causing injury to all near it, and so entangled in the ropes and sails, that it could not be got rid of. The noise was awful! the shrieking of the wind among the cordage, the roaring and dashing of the waters, the rumbling of the thunder, the groans and screams of the crew, the cracking of the timbers, and the firing of the guns, was, altogether, almost more than any one could bear.* Many of the sailors had got down into a boat, which by the continued flashes of lightning, those on deck saw upset, and not one poor creature was saved! The ship had struck again, and with such force that she was going to pieces fast, when poor Mrs Clement, who was almost out of her senses

* It should have been mentioned that the "Tippoo Saib" left England in company with two other vessels, the "Bangalore" and the "Golconda." They had kept near each other the whole of the voyage till this storm came on, which separated them. When vessels are in distress they fire guns, that any ships near them may come to their assistance.

with horror, and scarcely knowing what she was doing, seized the poor trembling terrified children, tore off Charlotte's sash, and bound her to a plank of wood that was washed up near where she stood; a piece of rope next caught her attention, which she hastily tied round William and the lid of a chest which had been wrenched off; her strength and courage then failed her, and she fell down on the deck!—— a frightful wave the next moment swept them all off into the water, and in a short time the ship was beaten to pieces. Charlotte and William screamed and cried as they were borne on the tops of the monstrous waves, till their strength failed also, and they knew nothing more till they felt themselves on dry land, and heard Neptune barking by their side: they were too weak and bruised to get up, and therefore remained quiet, listening to the deep and distant roar of the sea. They saw it was a beautiful morning, and they felt the warmth of the rising sun quite a comfort to their poor chilled limbs. "William," said Charlotte in a faint voice, "oh, William! poor dear mamma!" She could say no more, her grief was so violent! William replied not a word; but the thought of his kind tender mother, as he last saw her (lying so pale) for a moment on the deck, gave him strength to rise, for he hoped that she too had been washed ashore. He loosened himself from the cord, and moved away from his sister; she called out, "Pray, William, do not leave me; if you will help me, I am sure I can get up."—"Poor Charlotte, I had forgotten you," replied he; "I was so frightened about dear mamma; I must go and look."—"Oh take me with

you, dear William," and again she cried so bitterly, that he told her she would not be able to go, if she suffered her sorrow to be so violent. He untied her sash, and then they both sobbed to think what care that anxious mother had taken to preserve their lives, and that she had had no kind friend to assist her! They now set off hand in hand to seek her; they had not thought of, or missed Neptune since they opened their eyes, till they saw him at a distance come tearing along the sands, and bounding and wagging his tail as he came up to them. "Oh you ungrateful creature, to be so merry and glad when poor mamma——!" Charlotte could not go on, but her brother hoped Neptune had found their mother from his manner, and hurried her on to a large piece of rock that was at some distance from them; on going round it, they saw to their exceeding joy, their dear mamma sitting against the rock, and weeping for the loss of her precious children! They flew to her and flung themselves down by her side, kissing her with delight. The faithful dog stood by, wagging his tail, and looking as if he understood the whole scene. Mrs Clement's clothes were much torn, which this attached animal had done with his teeth in dragging her to the shore; after which he had been in pursuit of his two young friends: Charlotte was already thrown on to the beach, but William was brought by Neptune to her side:—their gratitude to him was never forgotten.

They had now leisure to look about them, and they found that they were near some steep rocks, which were covered with fine woods; they saw no signs of

people, and concluded that they were on an uninhabited island. William thought of Robinson Crusoe, and fancied what delight he should have in procuring food for his mother and sister, and in building them a hut; Charlotte thought of wild beasts, and Mrs Clement of the grief her husband would feel, when he should hear of the loss of the Tippoo Saib."

They now began to think of looking for food and shelter; they walked towards the rocks, and soon came to a steep natural path, which had been made by the force of waters, in the rainy season, rushing down their sides to the sea. William was the strongest and most active of the party, so he quickly scrambled up, till he was hidden among the trees above them; they soon heard his voice, however, calling out to them that he had found a beautiful cave, and some eggs, which he would bring down to them, that they might refresh themselves before they began their fatigue of clambering up the rock. In a few minutes he was with them; he had seen numbers of eggs in large nests on the ground, and had brought some fruit, which he had hastily picked up, and which he was sure must be good, it looked so beautifully. Mrs Clement was at first fearful of tasting it, as it was so unlike any thing she had ever seen; but recollecting the accounts she had read of the fruits produced in the large islands of the Indian ocean, she judged this to be one of the species of bread-fruit, and then she eat of it, and gave the children some without fear.

The eggs were so like those of our hens, that she thought there must be many fowls on the island, and

in consequence, that they would not want provision of that kind, while they should be obliged to stay in this solitude. They just then heard a cock crow; he was in a large cocoa tree, and in flying from branch to branch, he knocked off a beautiful cocoa-nut, which came bounding down the path to them; William eagerly ran for it; "Now, dear mamma," said he, with a smiling, cheerful face, "we shall have a grand breakfast; eggs, milk, and fruit!" he searched for a large stone, and broke the nut so well that he hardly spilled a drop of the milk; they all said how fine it was, compared with those they had eaten in England; "and how soft the fruit is," said Charlotte.

Being now quite ready, they began to climb, and admired at every step something new; the views were different from all others they had ever seen; large and wonderful trees, birds of the most beautiful plumage, monkeys chattering, little animals, like rabbits, skipping about; and as they advanced, they heard wood-pigeons cooing, and saw pretty green lizards rustling about the grass, and many other animals. The sight that met their eyes, when they reached the top, was grand and lovely: in the east, the sun was shining in cloudless splendour; the ocean yet swelling its sullen waves, as if in anger at the storm that had so disturbed it, was spread out as far as they could see; and nothing was visible on it but the scattered fragments of the wreck, that littered the beautiful shore, and reminded the poor exiles how probable it was that many of their fellow creatures, who had been alive with them a few hours before, were now perhaps floating

near them, dead! They all felt grateful, as they thought of the dreadful death which they had escaped; they remembered their good nurse Mary, talked of the captain's kindness, and poor Tom was bewailed too! Mrs Clement turned away with anguish from looking on a scene that had caused so much terror and distress. She saw a cave near her; the entrance to it was low; and she feared to go in, lest some wild beast or serpent should be there asleep; but recollecting Neptune, she resolved that he should try it; for she justly considered that his life was of less value to her than her children's; and much as she owed him, and grieved as she would be to lose him, yet he was the most proper of the whole party to attack an enemy, for they were all quite defenceless, but he had his weapons of defence always about him; she called him, but he was gone off again, and they determined not to go into the cave till he came back to them. They now, as the sun was high and hot, resolved to dry their clothes a few at a time: as they had neither hats nor bonnets, they could not sit out in the sun, the heat was so great, so they took off parts of their dress and spread them out to dry, and as they did not require a long time, they soon made themselves more comfortable in that respect. They knew that the beautiful trees would afford them quite shade and shelter enough during the day; but they were afraid of the dews at night, and hoped they should be able to take possession of their cave by the evening. The children begged their mother to lie down, and try to take some sleep, assuring her that they would watch by her side: she knew they would be gratified if she complied

with their request, so she laid herself on the grass, which the sun had already dried, and in a few minutes, notwithstanding her cares and anxieties, she was asleep. William's mind was naturally an active one, but till this late misfortune he had had no opportunity of proving that it was so; now, however, he felt that he was no longer a mere child, he saw his mother and sister had no one but himself to comfort or assist them; and he determined to make himself as useful as he could to his kind and dear companions. Thoughts seemed to come upon him, as he sat, that were beyond his age; he looked (his sister thought) as if he were a man; his eyes sparkled, he drew himself up, and suddenly recollecting himself, started on his feet, came round to her, kissed her, and whispered, "you will not be afraid, I know, to stay here alone while I run down the path to the beach, will you?" she looked as if she was going to say "*yes;*" but he stopped her, adding, "mamma and you have only me to do any thing for you; she I am afraid is unwell, she must be, from the fright and terror of last night; if you will not try to assist me, or, I mean, if you keep me through your fears always at your side, I can do nothing to make you both more comfortable." She kissed him, saying, "she would try and have better courage, and would not be frightened, if he would promise not to stay above half an hour; "your watch is not lost," said she, "and I want to teach myself how to find out the time quite perfect; and it will keep me from thinking of wild beasts if I sit down and count the minutes while you are gone, so give it me, dear William." He had never thought

of his watch, and was afraid it was spoiled with the wet; to his great joy however he found it was not injured, and that it was still going; for he recollected that he had wound it up, to amuse himself the morning before, and his mother had said it would injure it to wind it up at irregular times: he gave Charlotte the watch, and ran off.

His intention was to go down to the beach, and see if the sea had washed any thing ashore, as he remembered having read Robinson Crusoe did. While he hastened along, he could not help thinking how fortunate he was in having his dear mother, sister, and Neptune with him! indeed he never felt so much for his favourite hero, poor Crusoe, as now that he was in the same kind of situation. When he came near the shore, he saw his faithful dog dragging something along in his mouth that seemed twice as big as himself; it was a *hammock*, which is a bed that is used always at sea; it is hung from the ceiling, and as it is not fixed as ours are, it swings; this bed the dog was dragging towards William; who directly thought how great a comfort it would be to his mother when it was dry, for her to sleep on instead of the hard ground. After he had pressed the wet out of it as well as he could, and spread it on the beach in the sun, he patted his dog, and they set off together. As he was going round the huge fragment of rock (where he and his sister discovered their mother) he heard a crash, and in a moment he found that a large sea-chest had been thrown with violence against the crag, and had gone to pieces. This, he thought, would be a treasure indeed, if he could

but save the things that came out of it; there would be almost every thing they could want. All persons, when going long voyages, have a large chest, filled with all sorts of conveniences; this, from the articles he saw scattered around, William found had belonged to a common sailor. Many of the things floated, and Neptune was sent into the water for them; the instinct of the fine creature was so great, that he knew his master wanted all of them, and the dog dashed in and out so rapidly, that William had soon a heap of clothes at his feet; he spread them all out also to dry, and then, taking up a stone, he threw it into the water, hoping Neptune would understand that he wanted him to dive after those things which had sunk; he leaped in again, went down, and brought up a tinder box; finding his master pleased, he flounced in once more, and arose slowly with a large box, but it was so heavy that he could not hold it, and it sunk again. William knew he should find it when the tide went down, so he called the dog, and as he walked a little farther along the beach, a cask came bounding on the top of a great wave, and was lodged at his feet; he shook it, and found it contained some kind of liquor; presently, another was thrown up, and that he soon discovered was filled with biscuit, very little damaged. He then began to think of his sister; so collecting as many of the treasures as he thought he could carry, he tried to lift them, but he found the heap so heavy with the water, and so awkward, that he could not manage it: he thought a little while, and then ran and fetched a piece of cord that he had seen before, but had not then considered worth

keeping, now he knew the value of it, and bound it round the bundle of goods that he intended to take away. Neptune stood watching him, and when he moved off, the animal had sagacity enough to know what was wanted; William therefore no sooner laid down the rope to pick up something, than the dog seized it with his great, strong teeth, and dragged it towards the path. His master was astonished at his strength, and could not help laughing at the droll figure he looked! Finding him so useful, William took up the cask of biscuits, and they scrambled, with great difficulty, up the path with their treasures.

Mrs Clement woke just as they made their appearance; she assured her children that she felt much better and quite revived. She praised her good boy for his thoughtfulness, and then they began setting their goods in order. "Poor Neptune! how hard he has worked to-day," said Mrs Clement, "how hot he looks! what shall we give him?" The idea then struck her that they had not yet thought of fresh water. "What shall we do if we cannot find a spring, my dears?" added she. —"Mamma," replied Charlotte, while I was sitting quite still by you, when the wind didn't blow, I heard a noise like water falling; it was not the sea, for that roared, and seemed a great way off; but this, I thought, came from among the thick trees, and was almost above my head." They now listened, and in the pauses of the breeze heard the falling of water; off set William in the direction of the noise, up another steep pass in the mountain, and soon came to one of the most beautiful cascades in the world. Neptune had followed, and now dashed

forward and drank, till William thought he would never leave off. Charlotte, at the bottom of the ascent, called out to know if he had found it; he told her he had, and bid her look for something to bring him, that he might fill it for his mother and her; she looked about among the trees, and quickly found the shell of a calabash, or pumpkin, with which she skipped up the pass to her brother, who was lying down and drinking at his ease. They soon returned to their mother with the delicious draught, and then they began to think of giving Neptune some biscuit, for at present they had nothing else for him. "I'll tell you what!" said William, "I'll throw a biscuit into the cave, and if the dog goes in, and does not find any wild beast, we may be sure it is safe for us." His mother thought it a good plan, and, to their great joy, he came merrily out again, eating his biscuit. The space in front of the cave was very beautiful; it was clear of wood for about twenty feet square; a fine soft grass covered it all over; tall trees grew around it; the mountain to the west rose above it; and to the east was the sea, which they saw sparkling through the branches of the trees and shrubs which grew at the edge of the rock: this pretty spot was a great height from the beach, and excepting at the path by which they came up, it was perpendicular, that is, quite upright, like a wall. It was now some hours since they had eaten, and in their search for food they went different ways; Mrs Clement and Charlotte struck into the thick wood, and William and his dog scrambled up the cascade path, to look for all sorts of eatables. "Oh," thought he, "if I had but a gun, as Robinson Crusoe

had, I would kill some of these birds:" but he found that they did not require shooting; for, never having seen any human beings before and consequently not being afraid, he soon caught a chicken with his hands, and killed it, though with a sad heart; for he was not a cruel boy, and would not have taken the little creature's life away, but that he thought he was doing right. He found, afterwards, a deserted honey-comb, full of honey; and a few steps farther, he gathered a delicious looking melon; the eager boy saw some potatoes too, but as he had no spade, he could not dig them up, so they were left till another day. William now thought of returning; for though they could not dress their chicken for dinner, he was sure he had procured almost enough for them all, even if his mother and sister should not have been successful. He soon joined them, and found that they had added eggs, cocoa-nuts, radishes, pine-apples, dates, and oranges. What a dinner they sat down to!

The tide had, by this time, gone down a great way; indeed Mrs Clement judged it must be low water when they had finished their repast; and they proposed that they should all proceed to the sea shore, and assist one another to bring home whatever might be of service to them. Many needful articles were picked up, which need not be enumerated, but a box of candles was so very useful a discovery that it must not be omitted. Mrs Clement told the children to collect some of the planks and boards that had been flung ashore, and to bind them together; "you will see for what purpose I want them, at night," said she. They wondered what

their mother intended to do with them, but they would not ask her. The sun now began to sink behind the mountain, so they collected their valuables, making Neptune carry his share, and off they went to their pretty, but melancholy home.

Hitherto, they had been so busy in providing necessaries, that they had had but little time for reflection: and indeed, if they had not been so fully employed, the children's thoughts would have been far from disagreeable; they would not have considered beyond the present time, which was certainly to them pleasant; but the case was otherwise with their anxious mother; she knew that the articles which they had collected from the ship could not last long; and she dared not think of the sad time when their store would be exhausted; she dreaded too the rainy season, when they must expect to be confined to their dark cave, by day as well as by night. Charlotte saw that her mother looked very wretched as they walked towards home, so the little girl tried to raise her spirits, by saying, "how happy I am to be with you, dear mamma! how glad I shall be to learn to do every thing that is useful for you, and my brother, and myself! See, mamma, how strong I am to what I used to be, at Richmond; look how easily I can carry this great bundle of wet clothes!" She was rewarded by a smile from the kind face which she loved better than all the world besides; and she trudged merrily onwards. By the time they had arrived at the cave, it had become almost suddenly quite dark; the children were astonished, and asked their mother the reason; she told them it was partly owing to the

lofty hill towards the west; but chiefly to the circumstance of the twilight, which is always short it hot countries. "I wonder we never noticed in on board ship," observed William. "You were differently circumstanced, my dear boy; there we were never so employed as to require twilight, as we have been this evening; without knowing that you expected the use of the evening twilight, you depended on it to assist us after sun-set: here we are however, in the dark," added his mother. William opened the tinder-box immediately, and tried most industriously to strike a light, but they found, to their great vexation, that the tinder was all spoiled with the water! "What shall we do?" said Charlotte. "Pick up some dry leaves, and let us try to light them," answered her brother. She did so, but it was all to no purpose; and they were fearful that they should have to remain in the cave without a gleam of light to cheer them, when William suddenly called out—"goodness! goodness, gracious! mamma! look, look!—all about!—moving, moving!—like stars come down among the trees!" He startled his mother; but she soon explained that which had so astonished him. "Ah! they are fire-flies, my love."—"Oh dear! beautiful fire-flies, that I have heard you read about, mamma!" interrupted Charlotte, "like fairy lamps all round us!"—"Catch some, my dears, very carefully; you remember too, I dare say, that I also read an account of their being used by the natives of the islands in the Indian sea instead of candles." The children remembered the circumstance, and went on their pretty errand; they soon collected above a dozen, which their

mother put into a vial, which she had fortunately found in the afternoon while they were on the beach: the vial was carefully packed up in a small basket, as if it had contained something of consequence.

The small party now ventured into their cave, and were delighted with the comfortable and safe lodging it afforded them. They brought in the hammock and some jackets, and spread them on the ground to serve as beds; and then Mrs Clement took the planks and placed them upright, inside, against the opening of the cave, which was very small. "Now," said she, "my dear children, you see why I wanted these boards: if one of us, or Neptune, were to lie across them, nothing could get in without waking us." They now gladly lay down in their curious bedroom to sleep, for they were very tired; they could not help noticing however, the great use of their beautiful little living lamp; a pale blue light shed its delicate rays on all within the cave: it was a sickly colour, but so much better than total darkness, and so wonderful, that they watched it till sleep closed their eyes. The sun shining through the cracks of their door, awoke them all; the bright yellow streaks that shone so cheerfully into their dwelling, put out the little melancholy light that had made their last night's solitude so bearable, and Charlotte gladly let the little useful creatures fly to enjoy their natural life; Mrs Clement had only put a leaf over the mouth of the bottle, so they were not injured for want of air. "How sweetly the birds are singing," remarked Charlotte.—"Yes," said William, "I have often read in books that they are singing hymns of gratitude to

God; now I should think the birds in this beautiful island, have more to be grateful for on such a fine morning as this is, than those in England have on a dull, cold, wet morning, and yet they sing; how odd that is." As this was said to Charlotte, Mrs Clement did not reply to it; for however anxious she was for her children to be pious and grateful to their heavenly father, she thought them too young to converse on subjects that have proved too mighty for men of the finest natures and best understandings; therefore, as she could not bear to hear children talking like parrots on religious subjects which they could not comprehend, she never encouraged them to ask questions that should lead their young minds beyond the simple and pious gratitude and admiration, which the benevolence and the beautiful works of the Creator cannot fail to inspire in well-directed minds. They all went out soon after to collect their breakfast; the planks were now placed against the outside of the opening, to prevent any creature from going into the cave while they were away.

They found very little, excepting the delightful sorts of food which they had discovered the day before, nor did they require more. "Mamma," said William, "I have often heard you say you dislike raw eggs; now, how I wish we could strike a light and make a fire, that you might have them boiled!"—"My dear boy, I thank you for your kind attention to me; but as we do not appear capable of procuring ourselves a fire, I am very well contented to eat my eggs raw. 'Necessity has no law'—you have heard that adage, I dare say."—"Yes; and I have written a copy often, that used to

puzzle me to understand," replied he; "it is 'Necessity is the mother of invention:' I have seen what your saying means, dear mamma, and I'll try if I can't invent something to prove that I understand my copy." He smiled, kissed his mother and sister, and darted down the path followed by Neptune, who had had the same kind of breakfast that was given to him the day before. "Now," thought William, as he ran along the shore, "What shall I do for a fire? I cannot procure it as the Indians do, by rubbing two pieces of wood together; I have often tried that way till my arms ached, and I was as hot as fire myself: oh, if I did but know anything of chemistry, I dare say I should—— Aye! poor Mr Bryant! if I had but some of his phosphorus matches, I'd soon have a good bonfire!" Mr Bryant was a fellow passenger in the unfortunate 'Tippoo Saib;' he was a clever man, knew the science of chemistry very well, and was fond of trying experiments: he had a mahogany box in which he kept all his curious things, which the children, during the voyage, had often longed to rummage over; but Mr Bryant was a quiet, gloomy, silent man, who was always thinking, and did not like children; he said they were all troublesome, self-willed, ignorant, curious creatures, who had no wish to be made wiser by the society of grown people: he would have found the little Clements very different from those whom he had hitherto seen, but he was too thoughtful to try, so he never allowed them to be with him when he was making his experiments; and thus William missed seeing many improving and interesting parts of chemistry that would have been of use to him. Once

he saw him dip a match into a little bottle which he said was phosphorus, and which lighted in an instant. The unfortunate chemist was however drowned, as William supposed; and the wonderful box, no doubt, was lost. William continued to look for more stores from the wreck near the large piece of rock, when (covered with sea weeds) he saw the very box that Neptune had partly brought up when he was diving, and which to William's great joy, he now saw was the wonderful and delightful case of which poor Mr Bryant was so careful! He seized the prize, and finding he could not open the lid, crushed it in by dashing large stones on it. The inside was wet, but the contents not much injured; the treasure he sought for was quite safe, so off he ran, and was up the path in a minute or two. "Now, mother, dear mother, we shall have fire, and boiled eggs, and candles, and roast fowls, and potatoes (when I can dig them), and every thing delightful," said he, panting as he came up to her. "All but our liberty to go from here, my dear boy," said she.—"Now, don't fret, dear mamma," said Charlotte, "but try and think what we shall boil the eggs in!"—"Aye, what indeed! I see nothing but the pumpkin shell and the tinder box; let's try the shell, I have boiled water in an egg-shell many a time, and in paper too; I cannot see why a tough old thing like this, should not do," replied her brother; so he eagerly made the fire, which his sister kept supplied with leaves and sticks; and he had got some water from the cascade, when his mother told him he had better look for a large shell on the shore, of which she had seen many the day before, for

that she feared the fire would burn the wood of the calabash shell, before the water could prevent it: down he flew to find one, and quickly came up again saying he had seen a ship, he was almost sure, a great way off at sea! "Oh, if it should go by the island, and leave us here to perish, my precious creatures!" cried their anxious mother in an agony. "What shall we do?"—"I'll climb this tall tree, and see if I was mistaken," said William. He was quickly at the top, and called out, "Yes it is a ship, and I see land too, mamma, but it is a very great way off; how I wish we had a telescope; perhaps we shall find one on the beach, for I know there were several in the 'Tippoo Saib;'" so they determined to search for one. Mrs Clement's anxiety for the vessel in the offing (that means, a great way off) prevented her doing anything towards providing for their comfort all the day, and she fretted till she was quite unwell. Many times she desired William to climb the tree, and tell her if he thought the ship was coming nearer; but each time he was sure it went farther off, and in the afternoon he lost sight of it entirely. He then left Charlotte to make a fire, and roast some potatoes which he had managed to dig up with the large shell, while he ran down again to the shore to see if he could not find some fish; he thought that perhaps in the hollows of the large rock, the tide might have left some, nor was he mistaken; he found one large enough for them all three to sup on, and a sea cray-fish, which is like a lobster, though not so fine; some oysters too he found by going farther along the shore, and he thought with delight that his poor

mother would be surprised and pleased with her supper. He picked up also, some of the most beautiful shells that he had ever seen, which he carried home to please his sister.

He now returned to the cave; the sun had sunk behind the mountain, and he was contriving while he walked, how he could make a candlestick, in order that they might sit comfortably together in the cave before they went to bed (for it was early), when Charlotte came bounding down the path to him; her hands were all over mud, and she held up a great lump of clay with a hole in it for him to see. "While you have been away, dear William, I have been wondering what we should do for a candlestick to-night, and all at once I recollected that when when we lived at Richmond we had an illumination, and that the candles in the windows were stuck in clay; so I looked about and found some earth and got some water, and I have made this while poor mamma sat under a tree, crying." William kissed her, and told her she was cleverer than he was; for he had been thinking a long time about it, but could not contrive anything. They now prepared the fish in the same way that they had seen the cook dress it on board ship; the potatoes were roasted; William broke a cocoa nut for them to drink the milk of it, and opened the cask of liquor (which he found to be brandy), as he intended to persuade his mother to take a little with water to cheer her spirits. Mrs Clement was at some distance from the cave, among the trees, and knew nothing of her children's attention to her comforts, till they came with smiling faces that glanced

among the trees in the fading twilight, like some bright vision: to see them so happy was a gleam of comfort to her heart; and she blessed them as they walked towards their home. All was dark on the outside, and William said, "Dear mamma, the dews are falling; let us go into the cave:" she complied with his wish, and was astonished at what she saw. Their home which had looked so blue and dreary by the light of their fairy lamp the night before, was now bright and comfortable; two candles shed a cheerful glare all over the spot; the walls and arched roof were beautifully streaked with mineral productions, and a plentiful repast was spread, which the children begged she would taste. She was amazed; called them her little fairies, and partook of what they offered her with gratified feelings: they soon afterwards went to bed, their faithful dog lying across the door.

Mrs Clement's first thought on waking in the morning, was of the ship which her son had seen on the preceding day. She awoke her darlings, and begged William to climb the tree again, and look out towards the sea. "Take one of the white shirts," said she, "and some cord with you, and tie it to the topmost bough; so that if any vessels should pass, it may be seen that the island is inhabited." He jumped up, and was soon out in the open air: he saw the same lonely scene; and as he scrambled up the tree, he shook down a beautiful shower of brilliant dew-drops that were quietly hanging by their slender holds, waiting the rising of the glorious sun. Imagine the feelings of the happy boy when he reached his station; he saw, not half a mile from

the shore, a large ship, which is at all times one of the noblest sights in the world, and now he thought it the very best: he was too much delighted to speak, but came rushing down the tree so fast, that his mother thought he would fall and kill himself. William knew how much his news would gratify her, and he was, in consequence, so overpowered with the force of his feelings, that instead of speaking, he threw his arms round her neck and burst into tears. "For heaven's sake speak, my dear boy; in mercy tell me what ails you?" At that moment he heard the shouting of the sailors, whom he had seen in a little boat coming towards the shore from the ship; his only answer was "Hark!"—he could say no more; and his mother also hearing the noise, mistook the cause of her son's agitation, and thought that the halloing proceeded from a number of Indians, inhabiting one of the neighbouring islands, and that William had seen the dreadful sight! Her terror quite overcame her; she shrieked wildly, exclaimed "oh, my poor children!" and sank down on the grass, pale and motionless! The alarm of the children is not to be described: they knew not what to do; but they thought their mother was dead, and they stood screaming and crying, till they were hoarse; still their mother stirred not: when in the midst of their distress, they heard a rustling, and turning towards the path, they saw the kind face of Tom Starboard among the trees!—"Oh, mamma, poor mamma!" was all they could say:—he soon saw that Mrs Clement had fainted, so desiring them to bring him some water, he raised her up, and rubbed her hands; then throwing some of

the water in her face, they had the happiness of seeing her open her eyes. Her astonishment, on finding the worthy Tom near her, instead of the ferocious creatures whom she expected to see, was so great, that she could not for some time believe that the happiness she now felt was real.

Tom told her that a boat-load of those who were left in the Tippoo Saib (when she and her children were washed over-board) succeeded in getting clear of the vessel, as well as the rock on which she split; that the wind suddenly ceased; the morning dawned soon after, which enabled them to land on an island a few leagues from that on which Mrs C. and the children had been thrown; that the Bangalore, not having suffered so much in the storm as the Tippoo, had delayed her voyage, to touch at all the little islands called the "Candee islands" (on one of which they had been) in order to rescue such as had been perchance saved from the wreck.

The crew of the Bangalore knew that her companion had been wrecked, by seeing on the next morning several fragments floating near them, and one of the masts. "After having found me and my fellow-sufferers," continued the kind-hearted Tom, "I begged the captain of the Bangalore to delay his voyage a few days longer, that I might visit this island, which I saw from ours, in order to search for you; though I did not, I confess, expect to find you alive; and now, ma'am, cheer up; we shall soon reach Calcutta, and you and the children will be made happy by the sight of Mr Clement." Mrs Clement was by this time able to

exert herself; and she thanked Tom most gratefully for his humanity to her. "Come, my young friends," said this kind creature, "leave your solitary home, and come with your mamma and me to the boat." They had run into the cave to fetch their beautiful shells, the box of phosphorus matches, and one or two other things, which they wished to preserve, to remind them of their Robinson Crusoe life; then calling Neptune, who had wandered away, they came to their kind deliverer. "Who was saved with you, Tom?" said Mrs Clement?" Tom smiled: "you will soon see," said he.

They were quickly alongside the Bangalore; and to their great joy they found their faithful Mary, who was crying with delight to see them all again, also captain Campbell, the others of the crew, and among them Mr Bryant, all these to welcome them.

They had much to tell, and much to hear: and they set sail again with light and grateful hearts. Mr Bryant now became kind and attentive to the children, since he found they had made so good a use of the little knowledge they had stolen from him. In a short time a fair wind wafted them into one of the mouths of the wonderful river Ganges, which forms the harbour of Calcutta; where the anxious Mr Clement was waiting to receive his precious family. The meeting of this now happy party, and the descriptions which the amiable children had to give him may be imagined. Neptune and Tom could not be forgotten.

The kind sailor, Mr Clement soon discovered to be an old schoolfellow of the name of Charles Granville; he had taken the name of Tom Starboard when he

ran away from home to be a sailor. Mr Clement had become very rich, and was determined to give his friend a handsome fortune, as a token of his gratitude and friendship.

After staying till the next homeward-bound fleet was ready, they all set sail once more on that terrible ocean which had nearly been so fatal to them, and in due course arrived in England.

THE

CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE.

TALE THE THIRD.

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

Mr and Mrs Warner were persons of large fortune; they lived in London, and passed the greater part of their time in company, visiting, going to the theatres, and in all kinds of amusements. They had several children: William, a good-tempered youth about eleven years old, was at school; Emma was ten; George, eight; Alfred, five; and Edgar, three years of age. Mrs Warner was fond of her children, but being a fashionable lady she did not pass much of her time with them, but hired nursery maids; and hoped they did that justice by the little creatures, which she felt was not done by herself; how could she expect that it would be the case? These children were taken out every fine morning to walk in Russell-square, but they were to be dressed first; clean frocks, and spencers, and socks, and shirts, and shoes, were to be changed; hands and

faces were to be washed before the unhappy little creatures could breathe the fresh air. An hour's crying and scolding was employed every day in getting them ready for their uncomfortable walk; then their nursery maids had to dress themselves, and the children were kept waiting while their tyrants put on their finery to attend them. Any change to lively children is pleasant, however; and these daily walks, although attended with so many disagreeable circumstances, were delightful, particularly to the two elder children. After being confined almost entirely to the nursery all the morning, they longed to run in the square and find daisies, and look at the flowers, and play with their little neighbours, and watch the misty sun sailing (so they thought) so slowly through the red smoky clouds. These walks, however, were generally made wretched by the quarrelling of their playfellows or the scolding of the servants, who used to be talking and laughing with each other while the children got into mischief and then they were shaken and slapped for doing that which should have been prevented. Mr and Mrs Warner used frequently to leave London for weeks together, and as they had at that time no country-house, and did did not wish the trouble of a young family, they left them to the care of their servants; and thought they did quite enough in telling the housekeeper to see that Jane and Mary paid proper attention to the children. Mrs Warner had sometimes an hour or two to spare in a morning from her visitors, which she used to devote to the two elder children, George and Emma; she had desired that Jane would teach them to

read, and she used now and then to hear them, that she might judge of the progress they had made; and a ride with her in the carriage was always their reward when they pleased her. George was too old to be kept in the confinement of the nursery, where he did more mischief than all the others; and his papa and mamma had talked of sending him to school with his brother William, but it had been put off from time to time, and he was really becoming a dunce; for he hated reading, it had been made such a task by Jane, who used, whenever he displeased her to say, "If you will not leave off, master George, you shall come and learn a spelling lesson:" thus, instead of its being made an amusement to him, it was always a punishment; and as he was naturally idle he made but little progress. Emma was more fortunate; though she had the same tutor, she read better than her brother, for it had not so often been made a punishment to her; she was not so idle nor so rude, and she took great delight in reading amusing books. Mrs Warner had generally to bestow most praise on Emma, and George would seldom have been treated with a ride, had not his sister petitioned for him. They were allowed to choose the ride, and George always begged to go to the toy shop, while Emma chose the juvenile library.

It was a sad pity that Mrs Warner did not bestow more time and attention on these little unfortunate children!—she was in truth a woman of fine sense, and was good and kind. When she and Mr Warner were married, they were not rich: they resided in the city; and till after Emma was born, they had lived a retired,

quiet, happy life; but a distant relation of theirs died, and left them a very large fortune. They then resolved to take a house at the west end of the town, and become dashing people; their good sense was not sufficient to keep them from committing the follies that attend fashionable life. Mrs Warner had had no nursery maid for her two eldest children, but when she became a fine lady, she could not think of attending herself a nursery of children; no ladies do so; and thus arose all the ills that her little family suffered. There were times when she thought the great fortune had not made them happier than they were in their little, neat, snug house, when Mr Warner used to return to his pretty, simple dinner, with a smiling face, bless and nurse his little boy William, while she busied herself about the house, and in the evening, after the children were put to bed, used to read to her while she worked; or they walked out, or passed the evening with a friend. Now that they were fashionable people, they must do as other fashionable people do, that is, deprive themselves of many real pleasures for the sake of appearances, and the false happiness of high life.

Mr Warner, almost every morning, either rode out on horseback, or joined some gay friend in a plan of pleasure, and dined from home, or returned just in time to dress for dinner, if a large party was expected. His evenings, which used to be passed in the society of his wife and children, in reading to her, or in some rational employment, were now spent in continual dissipation; the theatres, the opera, and parties took all his time.

Mrs Warner's occupations were of the same kind;

and her little neglected children, to whom she used to be so attentive, were left to the care of servants; their parents rarely saw them: their mother, however, had too much good sense to run the risk of their being quite spoiled by being introduced to the company who so often crowded her house. She saw, in the visits which she paid to other families, the bad effects of introducing children after dinner, to be crammed with all kinds of unwholesome food that generally forms the dessert: she saw the greedy looks and artful smiles of the little creatures; and watched the silly conduct of the guests, who, to please the children, would run the hazard of making them ill, by loading their plates with cakes, fruit, and preserves; and she resolved that her children should suffer no such cruelty in the form of kindness. This resolution of Mrs Warner's, while it caused her little ones to be more neglected by their parents, was yet of service to them, for they were spared many illnesses which their young neighbours often suffered from over-eating: it also prevented their minds from being filled with vanity, by the foolish flattery that is too often addressed to children.

One morning, as Mr and Mrs Warner were sitting at a late breakfast, and planning future schemes of gaiety and extravagance, the footman entered the room with a letter; on reading the few words it contained, Mr W. hastily crushed it in his hand, put it (as he thought) into his coat pocket, and left the room. Mrs Warner was alarmed at his manner, and was going to follow him, to enquire if he was ill, or had heard bad news, when she saw the rumpled letter on the carpet;

she took it up, and to her grief and astonishment read as follows:

"SIR,

"I am desired to inform you that Mr Morgan (Banker) has left England with property to a large amount, including the £20,000 which you lodged in his hands a few days since. Officers of justice are in pursuit of Mr Morgan, and hopes are entertained that the property will be recovered.

"I am,

"Sir,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"*Lincoln's inn.* JAMES SELBY."

Mrs Warner sat down in great distress, to think over this sad misfortune, and to calm her feelings before Mr W. should come into the room again. She had heard her husband mention this money, which he had drawn out of the bank, partly to purchase an estate in the country, and partly to pay some heavy debts with, and she knew that they had not above £10,000 more in the bank: like most other persons of fashion, they were much in debt to their different tradespeople, and she feared to so large an amount, that when all demands were settled, they would have but a few hundred pounds remaining, for themselves and their young family to live on. It has been said before, that Mrs Warner was a woman of a kind heart and good sense, both which, in her late life of fashion and folly, had not been so apparent as heretofore; the time was now arrived for her to exercise the really noble qualities of her mind:—instead of fainting, or even weeping over

the disaster with which she had just been made acquainted,—she quietly rang the bell, ordered the breakfast things away, enquired of the footman if his master was still at home, and finding he was in the library, she put on a smile, and went with the letter open in her hand, to the door of the room where her husband was, it was locked;—"My love, are you here?" said she in a cheerful tone of voice; "yes, my dear, but I am writing," replied Mr W. in an unusually hoarse manner. "Well, and if you are writing, you can let me come in, I want to speak with you," said she: after a little pause, the door was unfastened, and she went in. He had turned to the window, and she saw his face was pale, and that large drops stood on his forehead; she went gently to him, and laid her face on his shoulder; "William, I know of our loss, I will not call it misfortune," she whispered; "and I am come to talk over our future plans of happiness with you."—"Oh, Emma, how can you mock me with such language, when you know that we have so long been accustomed to an almost princely income, and shall not be able now to call a hundred pounds our own;" and his manly voice faltered as he added, "what a father have I proved myself to my poor children, since our unfortunate increase of property!" His wife was rejoiced to hear him speak thus, she hoped he would listen calmly to a plan she had hastily thought of. "Now," said she, "look at me; no tears have I shed, nor shall I, for the loss of our fortune, nor will any thing but your grief cause me any; come, let us sit down and talk it all over." He looked at her with surprise and delight, for he saw at once that the wretch-

edness he had felt on her account was useless, as she appeared more than usually kind and cheerful; he kissed her, and they drew their chairs to the fire, to converse, having first desired that they should not be interrupted. They talked long and earnestly, and formed their future plans before they parted; they had just resolved to inform the children, when a gentle tap at the door announced a little intruder. "Mamma," said Emma, who (ready dressed to go out) entered, with her mother's permission: "I have been waiting above an hour for you to take me a walk; you promised to let me go, if I behaved well, and you told Mary to have me ready by one o'clock, and now it is nearly three." The little girl's voice trembled as she spoke, more from "hope delayed" than from the cold. Her mother drew her towards the fire, kissed her, and said, "if I were to disappoint you entirely of your walk, my love, should you feel very much vexed?"—"Yes, mamma, I should, for I wanted you to be so good as to buy me a new set of books, my brothers have torn several of my prettiest to pieces this morning, and I do not like to see my book-case untidy." The sad picture of extravagance among her children that these few words conveyed, grieved Mrs Warner extremely; and she felt that, however lightly she had treated the subject of their altered fortune to her husband, that she had much to attend to and arrange, among her little family, before their habits of idleness and extravagance would be conquered.

Emma was surprised at her mother's silence, and now first noticed that her father sat looking at the fire, and took no notice of her; the little girl untied

her bonnet, and said, "mamma, are you quite well?" —"Yes, my dear, why do you ask?"—"Because you look pale and sorrowful, and are not ready to go out; and papa looks so different from himself." Mr W. took his little girl on his knee, and said, "Emma, I have heard some intelligence this morning that has distressed me, and your dear mother has been comforting me, and trying to convince me that I ought to be rather rejoiced than grieved at it; this it is that has prevented her from keeping her engagement with you, and this news causes my altered manner, that you have noticed:" Emma looked grave, and rather stately, for the idea of an *engagement being kept* with her, sounded so grand, so like the fashionable conversations, which she often listened to, that she almost forgot to love and admire her mother while thinking of her own importance. Mrs W. watched her countenance, guessed her thoughts, and could not forbear smiling as she said, "your papa, my love, thinks you womanly enough to make 'engagements,' so I must not be so rude as to break them without apologising to you!"—here Emma laughed, and all her little vanity flew away with her mirth, when her mother more seriously added, "should you like to go and live in the country!"—"Oh, yes, yes!"—"And in a cottage?"—"oh, beyond every thing!"—"A poor, mean cot, with but little furniture, without servants, and any of the conveniences that we now enjoy?"— "Oh dear, yes! If I could but believe that we should really leave this smoky, ugly, dirty London, I should be so happy! and go a great way into the country, and have a tiny cottage and a garden (oh, a garden!) and a

cow and poultry—like that happy little girl in 'Mrs Leicester's school,' and bees, and a dog, and go out in the fields on the soft grass, and never hear the rumbling of the carts over the stones, and see the sun, and gather primroses and blackberries! only I don't know what they are; only I've heard Mary say that, when she was a girl, and lived at home, in Herefordshire, she used to go out with other girls to gather them, and nuts too! and how nice they were, and how she used to see the high hills, and once climbed up the *Malvern;* oh, I remember the name; and I went into the study, and hunted all over the maps till I found the map of England, and there I found the hill she told me of, and I shall never forget the name, for I did so want to go up too! and then the wind blew so, and the smell of the wild flowers came up with it, and she used to be so happy; and—oh, how I should like to be happy on that hill too!—and when I read the story of the discontented squirrel, in the dear 'Evenings at home,' how I used to think it must be the Malvern hills that he was so foolish as to wander away from; and how he deserved to be wretched, for leaving such a place! and when I see the market carts full of cabbages, I want to see how they grow; and always wish to go and look at the happy cottage gardens where all the vegetables come from; and when I go into Covent Garden Market, with Mary (for you don't like it, because it is so dirty, you say, mamma) I seem as if I would rather live in those little low houses, with all the fresh flowers coming every day from the beautiful country, than live in our own house: and oh! how Mary and I have tried to

keep flowers in pots alive and fresh! but they all look black, and wither in a few days, just like those out of the drawing-room windows: and how I love all my books that tell any thing of the country! and—oh, mamma, shall we, *do* tell me—*may* we go into a cottage, and be happy?" said the little girl, now fairly out of breath with the childish eloquence that had been so unexpectedly induced: she flung her arms round her mother, and waited, in eager expectation of a reply. "Yes!" said her mother, "now go and tell your brothers." She kissed both her parents, and bounding out of the room, darted up stairs, and before it appeared possible for her to have reached the nursery, the opening of the door, and sudden burst of young voices from within, told her father and mother of her speed.

They sat for many minutes after she quitted them, in silent astonishment, looking at each other; at length Mrs Warner said, "that child's extraordinary love for the country, I was quite ignorant of till this morning; what a state of self-denial and self-control has been her existence compared with ours! how innocent have been the yearnings of her heart, what an ardent longing for the pure pleasures of the country she has shown; how she must have pined for the joys which her simple eloquence has pourtrayed, in all their loveliness! how culpable have I been, that through my neglect, this ruling passion in my little girl, should have been unknown to me!—If I had any regrets at leaving my splendid residence, the knowledge I have gained within this half hour, would convert all my sorrow into joy what a treasure have I found in my sweet Emma, to

cheer the deepest solitude! To watch the opening of such a mind, and such a heart, must be surely one of the most delightful employments in the world! Where such a love of nature exists, goodness must be found in a superior degree!"

Mr Warner felt the truth of his wife's observations, and with a lightened heart prepared to make arrangements for removing his family into the country, whither he intended to follow them as soon as he had settled his numerous concerns, and prepared his creditors to receive the amount of their bills at a future time.

"Good news! good news!" shouted Emma, as she dashed open the nursery door, after leaving her parents in the library. George, Alfred, and little Edgar were rolling over and over on the floor, while their nursery-maids were leaning out of the window, but all turned to the joyous voice that burst upon them: "Guess, George, what is going to happen; something *so* delightful!"—"What do you mean, Emma," said he, as he got up from the floor like a little glass blower, he was so hot and dirty with his game, "are we going to Mr Nugent's?"—"Goodness me, I hope not!" said Jane; "a fine plague I shall have to get you all cool and dressed in time, for they dine at four o'clock."—"Something better than going to all the Mr Nugents in the world," replied Emma; and now the younger boys began to be interested, for they could imagine nothing beyond the treat that Mr Nugent's invitations afforded them; as he was fond of children and always made them happy. "I see you will never guess my riddle," said Emma, "so I'll tell you: we are going to

live in the country in a little cottage, and we are to have a garden, and, I believe, bees and a dog; and every think in the world that is beautiful and delightful! Oh how glad I am! are *you* not glad too, George?"—"Oh yes; and I will keep rabbits, and have a pony, and James shall teach me to ride, for he said he would when I went on the coach box the other day with him; and then I can ride by the side of the carriage when Jane and Mary take you and my brothers out."—"Oh we are not to have a carriage, nor horses, nor furniture, nor servants, nor conveniences, for mamma said so; but, dear me, I shall not care for that; for we shall have papa and mamma with us always, and I can make the beds and dress little Edgar, I'm sure, for I have seen Mary and Jane do it so often; and—— "Why, miss Emma, what in the world is come to you; one would think you had taken leave of your senses!" exclaimed Jane; "where did you pick up this low-lived nonsense of your papa and mamma going to leave this beautiful house, to live in a nasty filthy Irish cabin of a place, with the pigs and things all in the same room with you? I never heard of such a beggarly fancy in my life; if I an't sick to think of it!" Mary was not so shocked; she loved her mistress and the children too well to leave them, or she would gladly have returned to her native village; the smell of the wild flowers surpassed all the perfumes of her mistress's toilette cases; the bright sun and sweet air of her home, refreshed her, when her thoughts, as was often the case, flew back to her pleasant hills, while the smoke of the city surrounded her. She was injured, but not spoiled, by her

residence among London servants; she therefore hoped, but could scarcely believe, that the news which so offended Jane was true. Emma was gentle, and always avoided any contention with the violent servant who had rebuked her; not so George, who hated her tyranny, and always tried to vex and thwart her. "How dare you contradict my sister?" said he, looking more like a little furnace than even a glass blower! "I'm sure she knows better than you do, what is going to happen; and I hope, that I do, that when we go in the country, you won't go with us; you nasty, cross, ugly, great creature, you!"—"I'll cure you of your imperance, mister Saucebox," said the angry Jane, darting at him with the fury of a tiger; which the child perceiving, shouted, and kicked, and screamed so loud that he terrified his younger brothers, who though used to such scenes, had never witnessed so much rage on both sides; and the outcries and uproar that suddenly burst out among the children, reached Mrs Warner's ears, who hurried up stairs, and stood in the midst of the enraged group for some time unobserved. Finding that no accident had caused the dreadful screams, she soon recovered from her alarm; and seeing there was much to blame somewhere, she resolved to hear the whole of the quarrel. It was quickly and faithfully told by Emma; and Mrs W. felt the pain of self-reproach as she listened to the little girl; "For (she reflected) if I had accustomed myself to be more with my children, this girl's overbearing insolence and tyranny would never have gained the height they now have; nor would the dispositions of my young ones have been injured,

and their angry passions roused to insult those who have the care of them! Jane," said her mistress, as she sat down, "I am astonished that you should presume to punish my children; if they do wrong, you ought to acquaint me with their faults; I am the most proper person to correct them."

"Oh ma'am," said the saucy girl, vexed at being reproved; "it would be of no use my coming down to tell you of the children, when you are engaged with company, or gone out; I never see such a set of rude children; and if they are to tear my eyes out of my head, and I am not to bid them to be quiet, it's a very hard case and what I shall not bear; and so ma'am, if you please, I shall wish to leave my situation."—"As you choose, Jane, only *now leave the room;*" and her usually mild mistress looked so much more stern than Jane had ever seen her, that she quitted the nursery instantly. Mrs Warner was much vexed that this scene had passed in the presence of her children, and turning to George, who before the girl spoke had looked ashamed of himself, she saw him trembling with rage, and as soon as the doors closed he burst into a passion of tears, and flinging his head on his mother's lap, he sobbed with violence; then trying to speak, he looked up in her face and stammered out, "I was—going to tell J—Jane that I was sorry for—calling—her such names,—but when she—spoke—in such a shameful rude way—to—you, mamma, I could not; and now I would rather—be punished for a week, than tell her I am sorry, but I am, mamma; and—I will try never to be rude again—but I can't bear Jane!"—"You shall,

not be exposed to her violence any more, my love," said his mother, kissing her noble but faulty son; "I shall give orders that she shall not again come into the nursery while she stays in my house."

It would be tedious to mention the arrangements that were made before the family could leave London, or to follow the increasing impatience of the elder children (for William had been sent for from the expensive school at which he had been placed, that he might accompany the happy groupe); it will be sufficient to say, that on a fine morning at the end of March, by six o'clock, Mrs Warner, Emma, Alfred, and Edgar, found themselves inside a Worcester coach; and Mary the servant, William, and George, mounted the outside. Every article of luxury, even to Mrs W.'s and her children's expensive and elegant wardrobe, had been sold; simple and serviceable attire had been substituted; and the noble-minded woman, who now left her splendid residence without a sigh, took with her nothing that had adorned her house but her work-table; that favorite piece of furniture had been given to her by her husband in the early days of their married life, before the temptations and vanities of wealth had troubled their happy hours; and this work-table was too valuable as a relic of former happiness, and as an earnest of future comfort, for her to part with it.

Mrs Warner had an uncle residing at Worcester, and to him she had written on their loss of fortune, requesting him to enquire for a humble, snug, and cheap cottage in the neighbourhood, that is, within twenty miles of that city; and he had succeeded quite to her wishes,

as far as she could judge by his description of it in his letters. He was almost inclined to rejoice at any cause that should bring his niece, of whom he was very fond, so near to him; and she was pleased to think that the distance between them would now be so trifling. The kind man had insisted on her bringing her young family, and staying with him till her new home should be ready for her. The children were for many hours delighted with the novelty of their situation on their journey, and found incessant subjects of admiration and wonder. Towards evening, however, and long before they arrived at their uncle's, all were tired; and even the happy Emma had leaned back in the coach, wearied more with enjoyment than fatigue. At last, the welcome sound of the coach rumbling over the pavement of the city (welcome to all but Emma, who said it reminded her of London too much to give her any pleasure), assured them that their long journey had ended; and the bustle of the inn yard took place of the quietnes in which they had passed the last hour. Before the clatter of the horses' feet had well ceased, a spruce waiter, who looked as if all the business in the world belonged to him, whisked open the coach door and dashed down the steps, to the great terror of Alfred, who was gazing out, half awake, at the sudden blaze of light that burst upon him from the lamp over the gate. The bewildered boy wss quickly seized by the vigilant waiter, and jerked from the dark warm coach on to the pavement; Emma found herself shivering by his side, before she knew that she had left her seat; and Edgar would have followed as quickly, but he had

no intention of suffering any such breathless work; for he screamed in evident alarm at the new scene before him; his mother's soothings were vain, while that terrific waiter stood ready to snatch him from her, and hurry him away, as his brothers and sister had already been carried from his sight. Mary, however, by this time had fortunately alighted from the roof, and now came to supply the place of the dreaded waiter; then came the benevolent Mr Clare (the good uncle), with his servant to carry luggage: and after kind 'How d'ye do's, had been exchanged, and the packages collected, Mr C. hurried them all to his hospitable residence, where every arrangement had been made for the comfort of his expected guests, that he and his faithful housekeeper could think of. A large low room with a blazing fire and a clean hearth; a sofa, capacious enough to have accommodated another groupe besides themselves; the tea things set ready, with a little mountain of bread and butter for the younger travellers, who Mrs Mudge justly supposed would be quite ready to attack it: all these comforts awaited the tired young ones and their more wearied mother, who turned a face of smiles and tears to meet the cordial embrace of her kind relative, as he welcomed her to his home. "And now, my dears," said the gay and gentle creature, anxious to drive away his niece's sorrow, "Come and introduce yourselves to me; we have no ceremony here. You, sir, are William, I suppose; come, a good hearty shake of the hand, if you please—that's well; now help your mother off with her cloak, my dear boy, while I introduce myself—for I see they are bashful—to the

others." Emma longed to run up to her relative and kiss him, but her natural timidity prevented her from advancing above a step or two; she stopped and smiled, but that smile was enough; he knew too much of human nature, not to see at once that her disposition was excellent, and he caught her to his breast with delight. "This kiss is for your likeness to your mother, and this, and this for yourself, my darling Emma—you see I know your name: bring that little stool, and come and sit by my large old-fashioned chair. George, my boy, you must not think yourself too much of a man to be kissed; for you, too, are like your dear mother, and must suppose that she owns the kiss, if you don't like it; but we shall be better acquainted I see, for you look as if you would manage a pony well, and I have one that will try your courage. Eh! where are the tiny ones?"—"Mary has taken them into the kitchen, to give the poor little pretty tired souls their supper, sir," said the attentive Mrs Mudge, who had been bustling about the preparations for tea, and now offered to assist Mrs Warner, with all the respect and yet freedom of manner, that persons in her situation so often possess. This refreshing meal over, and the children in bed, Mrs W. and her warm-hearted relative drew their chairs to the fire, in order to talk over the plans that had been hastily formed in London. "How soon do you expect my good nephew to join his family, my dear," said Mr C.—"Oh, I fear not this month; his arrangements will not allow of his leaving London before, if even so soon as the beginning of May."—"Then I suppose I must become papa till he arrives; and order, and arrange,

and manage, to the best of my poor abilities, at your cottage; we must have a gardener to put the place in order; and we must buy a few chairs and tables, and all those sorts of things, you know; and——" "Oh, my dear uncle! you surely forget that our altered fortunes will require that we use the utmost prudence and economy in our little cot, and all that belongs to it; I of course expect that it will be very, very lowly, not to say wretchedly mean; indeed it cannot be otherwise, at the extremely moderate rent of ten pounds a year! but I am prepared for privations, and have been continually striving to bend my mind to bear them patiently ever since I heard of our loss; I have already told you so much of my altered views of happiness, my dear uncle, in the many letters which I have sent you, that little more remains to relate: if I am blessed with health and strength, although I shall be terribly awkward at first in my new situation, from my total ignorance of rural economy and domestic management, I still confidently hope that I shall overcome all difficulties; for my will is good, and I am neither too old nor too stupid to learn."—"Bless you, my good Emma! doubt not that with such a disposition, you would be cheerful in a more uncomforable abode than that to which you are going; with such a husband and such children, you must—you will be happy."—"And with such an uncle," tenderly added Mrs W., "believe me, I do not fear it!"—"Pooh, pooh! an old man's only fit to sit at home in his arm chair, and smoke his pipe, and think of those he loves, and keep out of every body's way," replied he, half serious, half jocular; and the

little sigh that escaped him, convinced Mrs W. that he felt one of the bitterest sensations which attends sensitive old age, the consciousness of being no longer useful; but she resolved to make him happy, by letting him feel that he was absolutely necessary to the comfort of herself and her little family. All she feared was, that his liberal heart would induce him to expend more of his income upon her family, than she could feel happy in receiving; and she resolved to restrict his generosity by resolutely refusing his assistance, if he should add any presents towards the embellishment of her little dwelling.

It was soon arranged that if the morning should be fine, a post chaise should be hired to convey Mr Clare, Mrs Warner, and the three eldest children, to see their new residence; some objection had been made by Mrs W. to the useless expense of a post chaise; but Mr C. was decided, and she was obliged to give way. At an early hour all the family were in bed, where the travellers slept soundly, recruited their strength, and by seven o'clock on the following morning, the usually quiet residence of Mr Clare resounded with the joyous voices of the happy children, all up and exploring, and wondering at the old-fashioned furniture which had been in their uncle's family, unaltered, for a century; it was so unlike the modern elegance by which they had been always surrounded, that many of the articles were a complete puzzle to them; and Mrs Mudge, while trudging about and dusting the bright and cumbrous masses of dark, carved mahagany, was continually appealed to for the names. A triangular shaped stand, bound with a broad

brass band, too low for a table, and too heavy for any one of them to lift, first engaged their attention. "Pray, Mrs Mudge, what can this very odd thing be," asked Emma. "That, my dear? aye, I dare say you never saw such a useful thing in your grand house in London, where you had butlers, and footmen, and coachmen, and what not, to wait upon you; why that, my love, is a celleret, it is to hold the wines and spirits that are in use (this did not explain much!); it is lined with lead to keep the wine cool; my master has the key, or I would show you; but at dinner time, when I get the cider out, you can look in." This was a very strange piece of furniture, but soon another attracted George's notice, which was more comical still: three round flat pieces of mahogany, one above the other, the top piece taller than William; a pole through the middle of them, and resting on three feet! and when he touched these little tables, they moved round and round, to his great delight. "What is this, Mrs Mudge," said he.—"Ah, that saves me many and many a step, my dear; why he's my fellow servant, only he don't keep up any conversation (the children looked at each other); it's called a dumb waiter." Here they all burst into a shout of laughter, which was so hearty and so long continued, that the bustling old lady seemed astonished and delighted at the power she possessed of causing so much mirth; and stood with her duster in her hand, and her arm on the high side-board, chuckling with as much delight as if this funny name had been as new to her, as it was to her merry companions. "Oh, a dumb waiter," said George; and

another peal of laughter.—"A waiter, where?" said little Alfred, peeping in half terrified, as the remembrance of the brisk person at the inn door came across him, but encouraged by the laughter to hope for something more agreeable with the same name; "is that a waiter?"—"Yes, a dumb one," said William, "and he is deaf too, and can't snatch you out of the coach as your friend did last night;" and then a more violent shout of mirth brought their uncle among them, in his flannel morning gown and red slippers; his fine bald head unpowdered, and shining with the effects of soap and hard rubbing. "Hey day! what a rosy set of cheeks; what a grand uproar; what's the matter? tell me, for I love a laugh."—"The droll dumb waiter," said Emma. He soon conjectured the truth, and joined as merrily in their renewed shout, as if he had been as much entertained by it as his little relatives were. "Well, but I have more curiosities to show you, my dears. I little thought that these venerable, old, quiet looking pieces of furniture, that have never before caused a smile, would afford such merriment; for I could not suppose that such useful things would be new to you. Look here," added Mr Clare, taking a small, bright, strangely-shaped key out of his waistcoat pocket, and going into the little hall; "here is a musical clock," and he put the key into a keyhole by the side of the case, and wound it up.—"Hark!" said little Alfred, "that is the noise, only a great deal louder, that papa's watch makes, which plays such pretty tunes. Oh, but I like this a great deal better," added he, as the clock, which was really a very good one,

struck up the fine martial air, 'Buonaparte's march.' " " How much it is like an organ," said William. " Yes, but how much better I love the sweet little watch!" said Emma; " I often used to think that, if I could hear one in an arbour, all overgrown with pleasant-smelling flowers, in a summer's day, with tall trees a great way above me, and bees and lambs near me, that I should fancy a fairy was playing me a pretty tune; and I somehow think that I could almost believe in fairy tales!" and she looked as serious as if she ought to believe in them. " You foolish creature," said William, " the next thing I suppose you would believe in, would be witches, as one of the boys at our school does; but then, poor fellow! he has only been at Mr Byrne's one half year, and before that he was at a school above a hundred miles from London, where they are still so ignorant and stupid as to think that there certainly are witches!"—" Let us listen to this pretty waltz, and we will talk about these things when we get to our dear cottage," said Emma, for she feared her uncle would think them rude to be talking, while he was engaged for their amusement.

At this moment, however, they heard Mrs Warner's room door open, and she came down among the happy groupe, just as the waltz was concluded. " Good morning!" " good morning!" was heard from every mouth; and " how have you slept, my dear?" enquired the affectionate Mr Clare. " Oh, exceedingly well, and I fear too long, for I have kept you waiting, my dear uncle."—" Not a moment.—I have been but a very few minutes out of my room; these young rogues, however,

stopped me by their mirth from going to feed the pigeons, which I always do before I eat my own breakfast; but you make the tea, my good niece; Mrs Mudge, let us have a famous pot of coffee.—I hate all the new fangled inventions, Emma; the percolators, and muslin bags, and urns, and stuff: I like a plain, old fashioned pot for my coffee; I hope you like it too!" —"Oh yes, my dear sir," replied she. "Well then, I'll take the young ones to see my pigeons fed, and be back in five minutes. Mrs Mudge, remember the coffee!" and away they all went, into the back yard, to see new wonders. As they passed the kitchen window, they saw little Edgar, sitting on Mary's knee, eating a huge breakfast of bread and milk. "Oh, he must come to see the pigeons, uncle, if you please;" said Emma. "Yes, to be sure; Mrs Mary, bring the little fellow out."

Almond tumblers, pouters, dragons, and fantails came flocking round Mr Clare, though with evident shyness of the little troop who were with him. Emma admired the fantails; "they looked so meek," she said; but when, on a signal from her uncle, they all took flight, glancing in the bright sun-light, wheeling gracefully among the neighbouring chimnies; and when, finally, the four almond tumblers darted up above the others, and then tumbled over and over in the air, they all gave the preference to these singular birds, and ran in to tell their mother of their delight.

Mrs Mudge had every thing prepared for them; and as soon as they had breakfasted, the boy Joseph was sent for a post chaise, and they soon found themselves

on the Malvern road, with the beautiful hills to their left, clear and bright, and looking absolutely as if they rejoiced in the cheerful air of this lovely spring morning. Emma stood leaning out of the window, and said not a word, when her mother, who had been talking to her uncle and had not noticed her, at last spoke to her, and found she was weeping. "My love, what is the matter with you?"—"Oh, nothing, mamma, dear mamma, only I am so happy, and so fond of looking at those beautiful hills, and so glad that we are going to live in the country!"—"And do you know the name of those favourite hills, Emma?"—"No, mamma, but they are more delightful than any that we saw on our journey yesterday."—"They are your and Mary's old friends, the *Malvern* hills, and that fine broad shoulder nearest to us is, I doubt not, the part which she went up, and her account of which pleased you so much, while you were in London. I determined not to tell you where we intended to live, and desired Mary to be secret also, that your surprise might be the greater; her native village is not above three miles from the spot which your good uncle has chosen for our residence, and she will thus have frequent opportunities of seeing her parents, and of scrambling up the heights that she so admires."

The little girl's joy was quite touching when she heard this delightful news, and she kissed her mother with grateful affection, for thinking of her pleasure in the choice of a situation for the future residence of the family. "And pray have you nothing to say to me?" said her uncle, who had been an interested spectator

of the whole scene; *I* chose the spot; *I* was in the secret; and kept it too, as well as Mary."—"Oh, yes, dear uncle, I *do* love you very much;—more than I think I ought to let you know."—"Why, you young gipsy?" said he, laughing, and patting her blushing cheek. "For fear you should think me rude and troublesome," replied she. "Bless your good and gentle soul, my darling child!" said the gratified old gentleman, "you are not likely to be rude or troublesome; and while you continue as you are, you will be too likely to draw me entirely away from Worcester, to the sweet solitude of Fairview cottage."—"Fairview cottage!" exclaimed Mrs Warner, in alarm; "my dear sir, our future cottage is, I trust, not honoured with a name!—such an humble abode as this," said she, pointing to a little, mean-looking, untidy tenement, which they were passing,—"is the sort of place I expected to occupy, and which I have always pictured to myself."—"No: here we are;—all right!" said he to the driver, who looked back, to ascertain if he was to draw up to an elegant cottage, on the right hand side, about a hundred yards from the little hut which Mrs W. had just noticed. "Tom Tyly guessed that we were coming here; 'tis not the first time he has set me down at this little gate, I assure you. Come, my dear ones! welcome home! heaven bless you, and grant you many, many years of comfort in your cottage! Come, give me your hand,—let me help you out of the chaise," added he, raising his voice; for they all seemed bewildered, particularly Mrs W., who sat still, overcome with a variety of feelings. "Ten pounds a year,"

thought she, "forty pounds would not be too much to pay for the rent of this tasteful, little abode!—how could my uncle so deceive us?—how shall I venture to find fault with his choice, and vex him by refusing to live in the house which he has chosen! and yet I must!" —"Then you will not even look at your cot, Mrs Warner?" said her happy uncle, pretending to look serious, yet trying to keep from smiling; "we all wait your good pleasure, madam." She felt almost overcome by the unexpected appearance of the house, and could hardly answer the observations of Mr C. as she at last gave him her hand, to assist her from the chaise.

"Return in two hours, Tom," said he to the driver; and they entered the pretty shrubbery gate. A winding walk among lovely, vigorous, young trees of different kinds, just bursting their velvet buds, and springing into leaf, led them to the entrance door, with a neat, green-painted, latticed viranda, covered with various climbing, and sweet-smelling plants, trained ready for their summer beauty. Opposite to the door, a pretty lawn gradually sloped down to the road, and admitted a noble view of the magnificent range of hills, with the pretty, scattered, white houses, belonging to the picturesque town of Great Malvern, lying at the foot of the hills. A garden, well walled, was on one side of the house, and a field for a cow on the other; and behind was a spacious yard, with the usual buildings round it. They were all silent, from astonishment at the different appearance of the cottage from that which they had expected to see. Mr Clare, enjoying their surprise, knocked at the door, which was immediately opened

by a smiling, neat-looking woman, who dropped a curtsey, saying, " I was not quite sure that you would be over to-day, sir; but, as it is so fine, I thought, mayhap, you would bring madam; and so I have made a bit of fire in the best parlour; and the beds are all aired, and the windows are all open, as you desired,—and—but please to walk in, ma'am," said she, throwing open the " best parlour" door, and dusting, with her apron, the brown holland covered seats of the tasteful chairs that stood round the room. All was elegant, though plain; the apartment was completely furnished; even to a beautiful and fine toned piano.

" Mrs Dobson, the fine keen air from the hills will make us hungry; you must let us have something to keep us alive till we get back; in about half an hour, I should think, my dear niece, we may be able to dispatch one of Mrs Dobson's chickens, eh?"—" Certainly, any thing you please; you are the magician of this enchanted spot, my dear sir, and we must obey your wishes," replied she, trying to smile. " Come then, we will explore the other parts of the magic dwelling," said he, gaily; and away they all trooped into the breakfast room, which was also to be the dining parlour, where a side-board, and every thing convenient and neat was arranged; then the kitchens, four airy bed rooms, and two attics, cellar, and outhouses: all was complete.

" Now, my dears, go and see if you can find your mother some primroses and violets under the hedges in the field, and return to us in about a quarter of an hour; I want to consult with her respecting the house; and away they all scampered. " Well, my dear niece,"

said Mr C., as they re-entered the little drawing room, which was called, by Mrs Dobson, "the best parlour," have I suited your views, have I pleased you in my choice of a cottage?"—"My dear uncle," said Mrs W., "I am quite at a loss for words to express my sorrow at the sad mistake that has been made! the rent of this elegant little abode (now I see that it is furnished, and so tastefully too) must be, at least, seventy or eighty pounds a year; and you must know that——"

"Yes, yes, my good Emma, I know all that your prudence would suggest; but now listen to me, and do not interrupt me:—twenty years ago, your father assisted me with £1000 to start me in business (ah, poor, dear Joseph! he was a generous and worthy man, and a kind brother!) trade flourished;—I acquired sufficient property to enable me not only to live comfortably, but splendidly, had I been so inclined; and about the time of your marriage I was thinking of giving up my trade, and going to London, to live near you, whom I had always loved; I have not a soul on earth to love but yourself, for your father's death deprived me of my other only relative. Before I could get my affairs settled, however, so as to share my wealth with you, I heard of your great increase of fortune, by the death of Mr Warner's cousin; and then supposing, that with such a princely income you could not require any of mine, and knowing that the company of an old fellow, like myself, would not be desirable to the fashionable folks who frequented your grand house, I considered that I should do a wiser thing by remaining in my old abode, and contenting myself with wishing you happy

at a distance. Well, time hung heavily on my hands; I had been used to an active life, and I took it into my head, some years since, to buy a few acres of land, build a pretty cottage on it; and let it, or live in it, as I might decide. This neighbourhood is so much admired and frequented, that my little 'Fairview' has been let to respectable families every summer. Your loss of property, which *I* consider the most fortunate circumstance that could have happened, for you, your family, and *myself*,—made me think of and adopt a plan, which I immediately put in practice; it was to settle this cottage on you, and then invite you to come and live in it, to be near me: you, however, to my great delight, sent to request I would seek for a little, lowly place; and thus I was enabled to keep my secret, and to surprise you, as I have done to-day:—and now tell me if you can like your new home; and if you can let a fond old uncle (who hates a crowd of hollow-hearted fashionables) come sometimes and see the sweetest sight in nature—a lovely and excellent woman, who has escaped, without a blemish, from the contagion of splendid folly, devoted to the welfare and happiness of a worthy husband and engaging children?"

Mrs Warner was too much agitated to say all she felt, at this beautiful specimen of generous affection; she could only smile through her tears, and tell him she almost envied him his feelings! however she soon recovered sufficiently to say to him that the happiness he had bestowed would be incomplete, if he did not come and share their lovely solitude, by residing entirely with them. "No, my love, no!" replied he;

" those who are in the constant enjoyment of blessings, are apt to grow cool towards them, and to forget that they are blessings; but one of the greatest mercies of this life is the anticipation of happiness: and this anticipation will be always in my power to enjoy, if I visit you whenever I feel inclined to give myself a treat."—" How I long," exclaimed Mrs Warner, " to tell my beloved husband of your goodness, my dear uncle! but here come the young ones, with their hands full of those placid-looking primroses, and

" The dear violets,
That steal their scent from heaven."

The children were all delighted with their new residence; William longed to begin gardening; he had had a little garden at school, and he liked it so well, that he fancied no pleasure could equal that of sowing, planting, digging, weeding, &c.; his mother was pleased that his taste had shown itself in so sweet, so useful, and so innocent an occupation; and she told him that he should be instructed in the necessary parts of the art, and then she hoped to eat no vegetables, nor fruit, but of his growing. He looked quite pleased at this observation, and he told his mother that he had read several books on gardening, of Mr. Byrne's, but that one of the boys had lent him a nice little book, called " Adam Stock, the little Gardener," which had taught him *so* much; and it was written in such an easy manner, that he could understand every word. " Indeed!" said his mother, " I should like much to see it."—"Oh, you would be pleased with it, mamma; and Mrs Stock was so like you;—at least the book seems so true that

I cannot help thinking I knew and saw all the family; and then Adam was such a capital fellow, and Mr Stock was so clever in gardening, and so kind, that I am sure I never liked a book so much; and—how I wish that you would try and get it for us! I think Emma would be pleased with it too; for there is a little girl in it, just about her age, her name is Bella, and she is Adam's sister—and——" "Why, Will, I have not heard you say so much since you came to Worcester," said his uncle; who always watched every word the children spoke, in order to judge of their characters: he was pleased with the youth's eagerness, and said, "I'll take care that you shall have your favourite little book, my boy, if it is to be procured; I'll give my booksellers in London orders to send it down as soon as possible."

All this time they had been regaling themselves with tongue and fowl, and beautiful cider, and wine, with which the thoughtful and kind Mr Clare had stocked the cellar. "Here comes Tom Tyley," said George; and they were quickly on the road to Worcester again. "Oh, uncle, what beautiful, large, tall church is that?" said Emma, directing his attention to one on which the last crimson beams of the setting sun were shining, with extraordinary brilliancy. "That is our fine cathedral; and before you go to Fairview cottage again you shall all go and see the inside of it, and hear the organ, and the boys sing; and I must take you to Flight and Barr's china manufactory; and you must look at a very favourite old building of mine, called 'Edgar Tower;' and— "My dear sir," said Mrs W. "you have

named treat enough to last us a month, and I hope we shall remove to our beautiful cottage in less than a week."—"Well then, the dear children must often come over to see me, and I will endeavour to amuse them as well as I can."—"Oh, thank you, uncle, thank you!" exclaimed the young ones. "Here's the inn," said George, "where our Alfred was so frightened with that 'Billy Bustle' of a waiter; and here is my uncle's house; and Mrs Mudge, with her clean white apron on; and Alfred's goodnatured little face; and there's Mary and Edgar, I declare!"—"Well, Miss Emma, said Mary, as she came smiling, to assist her out of the chaise, "so you have seen the pretty hills that I told you of! are they not beautiful?—how well I kept my mistress's secret!"—"Oh, Mary, I am the happiest little girl in the world, I do think!—Now I hope that when we go to live at 'Fairview cottage,' that mamma will give you a week's holiday, to go and see your friends, for Mrs Dobson can do your work, I dare say."—"Oh dear, Miss, are we going to live at that beautiful cottage? oh, I know it well; and Mrs Dobson too! she is my mother's sister—my own aunt! and your dear mamma told me, before we came from London, that I should go home for a week:—la! miss Emma, I am as happy as you are!"

The cathedral was the only sight which they went to see before their removal from Worcester. The enormous size of the building astonished the children, when they drew near to it; and they wondered,—as many others have done,—how man's ingenuity could erect so vast an edifice; and Emma said to George, that

when she saw so many buildings as London contained, and when she looked at this huge place, and then thought of the numbers besides that England had in it, she wondered that the earth was not exhausted (*emptied* was her word) of all its stone, and clay, and slates! George had not thought on the subject before; but he did not fail to think very steadily, *for a whole minute*, after his sister's observation. These children, excepting William, had never been inside of a church, so that the delight which Emma and George felt, on entering the magnificent structure, may be imagined. Emma crept to her mother's side, and whispered, "how glad I am, that I never saw the inside of any of the churches in London, with only Jane and Mary; how grateful I feel, dear mamma, that I am with *you* in this wonderful place!" Her mother pressed the little girl's hand, and told her, that one of her father's wishes was already accomplished, in her evident delight at the stupendous building. "I wish he was here, mamma, to see how pleased I am: who built it?"—"The Roman Catholics, a long time ago; but you cannot understand the term Roman Catholic yet; go now, and admire the beautiful stained glass window; when we get settled in our dear cottage, subjects relating to religion, and many many others, that your little enquiring mind longs to understand, shall be talked of between us, whenever I have leisure." "Oh, thank you, thank you, dear, kind mamma! how very glad I am that we have left London!" said she, as she hastened away to join her brothers, who called her to look at an old monument, and a figure sculptured (that is, cut in stone or marble) with

chain armour over it. All, of course, were at a loss to understand it, and their mother kindly left the exquisite monument of Bishop Hurd, which she and Mr Clare were admiring, to explain the subject of their wonder. "The man whom this figure represents," said she, "was a warrior, and lived in the times when all who went to war were covered with armour, to save them from the sword cuts and lances of their enemies; and this strange looking net work which appears to fit his body and head so closely, is made to imitate the *chain armour*, which at one time was very much used; it was composed of links of steel, interwoven with each other; and although heavy enough to weigh one of us to the earth, was considered lighter and more commodious than any other armour; as it yielded to the motions of the body, and was less dangerous when struck by a violent assailant. I should think a joust or tournament, must have been a most imposing and interesting sight, where the combatants as well as their horses, all wore this easy pliant defence," added she, turning to Mr Clare, "the graceful movements of the knights could never have been hidden; but those stiff breastplates, and uncouth coats of mail, that preceded the use of the chain armour, are my abhorrence; they must have disguised even the most noble figure: a man could only look as if he were made of iron." The children longed to hear more about jousts and tournaments, and their mother promised to tell them all she knew, at some future time: just then, the fine sound of the organ burst forth (the persons belonging to the cathedral were assembling for morning prayers) the rich, full

tones rolled over their heads, and dispersed at the farther end of the building, like clouds of smoke, and more and more still followed, filling the vast structure with its awful grandeur; then the plaintive voice of the "*minor canon*," reading the lessons, came floating to them as they stood, in mute delight, in the outer part, or nave of the building; and the echo, the distance, the gentle chanting tone in which he read, seemed so like the voice of prayer, that all were affected by it: it was soothing. Then the young voices of the chorister boys, aided by the organ's softest tones, breathed out a chaunt so tender, so bewailing, so sublime, that tears rolled down the cheeks of the enraptured Emma, and her sensitive mother.* The cold air chilled the whole party, however; and they turned to quit the church, after receiving a promise from their uncle that they should visit the cathedral, whenever they came from "Fairview" to see him. As they passed the ranges of tombs where sculptured knights lay, silent, grim, and old, Mrs Warner could not forbear reminding Mr Clare of that exquisite verse of the poet Keats, in his poem, "The Eve of St Agnes:"

> "The sculptur'd dead, on each side seem'd to freeze,
> Emprison'd in black purgatorial rails:
> Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
> He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails,
> To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

"Ah," thought Emma, "how I long to talk to mamma at our pretty cottage! I will ask her, one of the first

* To those who have daily heard the task, the drudgery of the cathedral, this picture may appear overdrawn; but it is true, and is taken from nature.

things, to tell me the whole of that poem; for though I do not quite understand all of it, I soon should with mamma's explanations; I am sure I should like it, for it sounds almost like music, the words seem so soft; and mamma's voice sounds so sweet while she repeats them!"—Mrs W. and her uncle having mentioned Keats, a subject so interesting to them both, they talked of his beautiful works with delight; and of his sorrows and his early grave with regret, till they reached home. Emma lost not a word; and her future love for good poetry, she always traced to her first visit to Worcester cathedral.

Mrs Warner wrote to her husband on their return from Fairview, and in two days had the comfort of receiving a letter from him; in which he told her, that he hoped to arrange his affairs so as to be with his dear ones, and his worthy uncle, in less than a fortnight; that he found his creditors willing to give him time to pay his bills; for they all made the distinction between those cruel spendthrift men, who run in debt without the means or wish to pay their unfortunate tradespeople; and a hard case like that of Mr Warner, who had been robbed by a villain of his property, and thereby rendered unable to pay them. Mrs W. wished to be quite settled in her beautiful abode, before the arrival of her husband; and therefore begged her good uncle to spare her sooner than had been arranged; he could make no objection, and in three more days they all found themselves at home. A week was given to Mary, who went to her native village; and by the time she returned the family was settled; her master had

arrived, and the regular habits of this now quiet and domestic family, had been so well arranged, that they soon found their new mode of life more delightful than they had even anticipated, and that is saying much; for all persons (children as well as those who are advanced in life) ever enjoy those schemes of happiness the least, from which they have allowed themselves to expect most pleasure. Emma so loved her mother, that she would have been her very shadow, ever at her side; had not Mrs Warner appointed hours for study, which her good sense convinced should be kept free from all interruptions. William's exceeding fondness for gardening increased; his father also, who having always lived in London, knew little or nothing of the practical part (that is, the working, or real practice), caught some of his son's delight; and they used to dig, and plant, and sow, and weed, and rake together during several hours in every day. They soon had the assistance of that very delightful, useful, entertaining, and unpretending little work, 'Adam Stock,' and found it of real service in their pleasant occupation. Mr Warner had a taste for Botany, but which had been confined to reading; now he found unceasing delight in pursuing it practically; the children evidently possessed a similar taste, and this fresh source of amusement heightened the enjoyment of their delicious walks. The summit of Malvern was soon explored; and the exquisite specimens of mountain flowers which they there obtained to add to their '*Hortus Siccus*,' made it their favourite ramble, or rather scramble. This being their first attempt at botanising and preserving speci-

mens, one book served for all of them; for Alfred, and even little Edgar, sometimes found a fresh plant which they brought to be gummed in to this family preservatory. But a more regular plan was to be adopted for the next summer; they were each, that is, Papa, William, and Emma, to have a separate 'Hortus Siccus,' which was to be made of the largest sized white blotting paper: they also discovered a better and less difficult plan for preserving their plants, that is, by pasting or gumming narrow slips of paper (perhaps two to each specimen), across the stalks. Mr Clare had not forgotten George's pony, but he had delayed to send it in order to purchase a low four-wheeled phæton, which the animal was to draw; for he knew that the little boy would be better pleased to partake with the whole of his family, the agreeable rides which the addition of this carriage would afford them. One afternoon, then, in the middle of June, as they were all amusing themselves on the lawn, Mr W. lying on the grass reading 'The Months' aloud to his wife, who was working; William and George endeavouring to subdue some stubborn boughs between two of the shrubbery trees, in order to construct a fairy bower for Emma, who stood by directing their labours, and hoping for success; Alfred and Edgar watching with untired delight the tiny dabblings and vain-glorious scratchings of a brood of ducks, and another of chickens, in two coops, which had been brought for safety from the poultry yard: the whole party heard the sound of wheels, and looking up, saw that a chaise stopped at the gate, though the trees were too thick for them to discern

their visitor. All form and ceremony had been dismissed from the minds of Mr and Mrs W. when they left London (the place where form and ceremony should only exist), Mary, therefore, was not summoned to go the gate, neither were all the children suffered to flock round, that they might stare; vulgarity was as much shunned as the absurd restraints of etiquette. Mr and Mrs W. knew that whoever the person might be, he came to visit them; therefore, with true politeness and simplicity of manner, they went together to welcome their guest; and most sincerely did they welcome him, for it was their dear good friend Mr Clare, who had driven his little present over, to take them by surprise. The well-known and hearty voice of their uncle was quickly recognised by the children, who came trooping down the walk to greet him. "Oh, what a beautiful pony! oh, what a delightful chaise! How the brass work on the harness shines! what a long mane and tail! Is this the little pony that my uncle talked to you about, on the first evening we came to Worcester, George?" and twenty other questions and exclamations passed in a breath!

"Where are you, George," said Mr C. at last. "I have brought you your pony; I dare say you thought I had forgotten the promise I made you; but, till old age shall have impaired my memory, you will find I shall not forget that which I pass my word for: the truth is, I thought I should run the risk of spoiling a good generous disposition by making it selfish, if I gave you a pony that one alone could ride; but that if I added a chaise to it," (with that nursery conveyance, a

dickey, added he, smiling and looking at Mrs W.) "several of the family could enjoy themselves at once. Don't interrupt me yet," said he, seeing that all were going to pour out their thanks; "I do not know how you will manage, my dear nephew, as you keep no man nor boy, and that puzzled me as I came along; for I should be sorry to interfere with your domestic arrangements, or to offer you a present that will be 'more plague than profit,' you know: so now, what is to be done?"—"First let us thank you, my dear sir, for unceasing kindness, and for this beautiful present (the children failed not to shew their gratitude, in their own sincere and joyous manner); "Now, walk in, and let us consult at our leisure."—"No, no! we will stay out on the lawn, I long to see your ducks and chickens; I hope you are a careful nurse, Emma," added he, patting her on the head. Mr W. consulted a minute or two with his wife, and then said, "You know, my good friend, that it is my object to make my boys useful; we all find the benefit, as well as pleasure, of being of service in the family; and I do not see why we should not, among us, take the charge of the chaise and pony; George, though young, is strong and active; fearless and gentle; therefore he is well calculated to have the care of his pretty little horse; William will, I know, assist him; and I will 'brush up' all my jockeyship, in order to instruct them. I certainly do not feel justified in going to any other expense than the keep of the pony; for——" "Oh, do not be anxious on that head; I do not perform my deeds, such as they are, by halves; the keep of the horse, of course, is my affair.

You do not think I would do any thing so unkind and unthinking as to put you to expense, because I was seized with a whim to give George a pony! No, no! a load of straw, and one of hay, as well as corn, will be here in an hour or two; the stable and coach-house are ready, you know; and you have nothing to do but to drive out my dear Emma and as many of the children as you can take, for a few miles; and by the time you return, Mr Brown's bed will be ready for him: is that to be his name, Will?"—"I do not very well like it, uncle, it seems so common; but I'm sure I cannot find a better." A short consultation was held, which was soon finished by Mrs W. who soon exclaimed: "look at his lovely sleek coat, now the sun shines on him; he looks almost crimson, quite a claret!"—"Oh, Claret, Claret, that must be his name," said William, "for it is his colour, and it will remind us of my uncle too, *Clare-t!*"—"Oh famous! well done, William!" shouted George; "Claret he shall be called!"—"Now then, who is to go?" said Mr W. "Come, my love, put on your bonnet."—"Oh," said George, "Emma and William, to be sure; then we three little ones can go the next time."—"You deserve your horse, my dear boy," said his uncle, "for your disinterestedness and kindness to your brother and sister."—"I think not one of my children is selfish," said Mrs W. as she went to put on her bonnet, "and most thankful I am for it; I loathe a mean and selfish character so much, that it would cause me real grief to find any of my little ones possessed of it;" and she rewarded George with one of

her sweet approving smiles, which was always a sufficient recompence to him.

Away they drove then, as George had requested; papa and mamma in the chaise, William and Emma in the dickey. "Uncle, let me draw you a little cider," said George, "we do all like it so much; I know how to draw it very well; I do so many more things than I used in London, and so does Emma, and indeed all of us but Alfred and Edgar; indeed *they* know weeds from plants, and are very useful in weeding the young crops; and what do you think? we all picked gooseberries, and top'd and tail'd them to-day, to make gooseberry-fool for supper!"—"I hope you are going to stay all night, then you can have some, uncle," added Alfred, who timidly came up and took Mr Clare's hand. "Thank ye, my pretty darlings," said their affectionate relative; "yes, I will stay all night, for——" "Oh, but your cider," said George, "I quite forgot it;" and away he darted, leaving his uncle seated on the rustic seat, who called in vain after the flying boy, to tell him he would rather wait for tea. Edgar ran after him, however, and soon brought him back. They chatted for nearly an hour, and then Mr Clare proposed a game at hide and seek among the trees. The children were delighted; and as the sun was now losing its power, they engaged themselves with their merry uncle, all in the highest glee, till the return of the phæton party, who heard the shouting of the young ones, and the hearty laughter of Mr Clare, while they were at some distance. The pony was pronounced the best on earth,

the chaise was delightful, the road beautiful, and the riders in the highest spirits. A further game was proposed, and while the tea was being made they were the noisiest and the happiest groupe in England. The promised gooseberry-fool made its appearance for supper; and all the family, Claret and all, (who had been well groomed, considering) slept soundly till five o'clock. William then awoke, and calling George, they went to see if they could rub down the pony, and clean out the stable; but they found their father up and washing the chaise. "Oh, papa, are you up so early?" said William.—"Yes, my dear boy; increase of work should induce to increase of industry: Claret must not hinder us from our duties in the garden; we must be up an hour earlier than heretofore, in order to attend to our new employment. It is too soon to rub down the pony, come and help me with the chaise; I am awkward at first, but I have so often seen grooms wash carriages and clean harness, that I do not fear being able to do it, and to teach you. I shall like you always to assist each other whenever you can." They soon finished the chaise, and then went to Claret, anxious to see and admire him afresh; gave him his breakfast, and then were ready for their own.

"Niece, do you like gipsying parties?" said Mr. Clare to Mrs Warner, while they were at breakfast? —"No," said she, "I cannot say that I do; at least I did not enjoy the only one with which I ever went. It was before I was married, while I was on a visit in Wiltshire; we went to the Marquis of Bath's estate, Longleat; there were twenty or thirty in company,

persons of all ages and opinions, and almost all strangers to me; they did not seem well-selected; some disliked others, many preferred a water party—there were too many for the boat to accommodate. Those who were disappointed, strolled into the thick pine woods and lost themselves, till the party had re-landed from the boat, and dinner was kept waiting in the fishing house: many of the gentlemen wished to sit longer after dinner than the occasion warranted; and in short, several others besides myself, returned dispirited and ungratified; if that is the usual style of conducting gipsying parties, I confess I do not like them."—"Oh dear! oh dear! what a description!" exclaimed Mr Clare; "I do not wonder at your dislike; our Worcestershire manner of gipsying is very different, I assure you. Suppose you leave me to arrange matters, and promise to give the scheme another trial, will you?"—"Oh, certainly! I cannot fail to enjoy it with my present company," added Mrs W., smiling and looking round on the glad faces at the table. The young ones knew it must be something pleasant, because their kind uncle proposed it, and they longed to ask all about it; but finding they were quite unacquainted with the plan, he would tell them nothing more than that he hoped in a week or two, if the weather continued settled, that they should all go; then turning the conversation, he said to Mr Warner, "I know and highly approve of your resolution to keep no company; but I do not approve of your living entirely secluded from your fellow-creatures: one or two families as occasional visitors, if they are pleasant intelligent people, and their children

well regulated, I think you would like to become acquainted with, if it were only to vary the sameness of domestic solitude."—"Oh, of that," exclaimed Mr and Mrs W. at once, "we should never tire, it wants no varying; and the children, by their exceeding happiness, appear to think so too: as we are happy," added Mrs W., "it seems needless to incur a certain expense for an uncertain enjoyment; nevertheless, for the sake of my children, I would admit a visitor, such as you describe, my dear sir."—"That pretty white cottage," said Mr Clare, pointing through the open window, to one that had often excited their admiration from its pleasant situation, "contains as agreeable a little family circle as you could expect to find in a country place; they are plain worthy people too, and know nothing of ceremony. I have named you all in a way that makes them eager to become intimate with you; but till I knew whether you would both be inclined to cultivate their society, I would say nothing to them respecting it. What say you to a drive over, 'tis barely a mile and a half to their house; I'll drive the two Emmas, and you, my dear nephew, with William and George, can walk. Mr and Mrs Russel are old friends of mine, and their two children (a boy and a girl about William and Emma's ages) are my godchildren; Tom is called after me, and Jane after her mother." Mr and Mrs W. willingly agreed to this proposal; and after the usual domestic affairs of the morning had been attended to, they all proceeded through lanes of exceeding beauty, to the neat and tasteful cottage of their neighbour.

A telescope was placed at the open window of the pretty drawing room into which the party was shown, and on looking through it, William found that it was directed to their house; he cried out, "Oh, Alfred will fall out of the sycamore tree! oh, I'm sure he will!—there! he is down, and little Edgar is running into the house to call Mary, and"—— "Oh! let me look, for heaven's sake!" cried his terrified mother. "Thank God, he is not hurt! Mary has lifted him up, and is smiling; she is drying his few tears, and now he is racing his brother down the lawn! Oh what a mercy that he is not injured!" Here Mr and Mrs Russel, and soon afterwards Tom and Jane entered the room; the frank cordial manner in which they received their new neighbours, delighted the whole party, and they became intimate at once, as if they had known one another for years; with this great advantage, that each party would be new to the other for some time to come. After the first few minutes had passed in the usual introductions, &c. Mr. Warner said, "I see you make us sometimes the subjects of your observation," glancing at the telescope, and smiling; "I was not aware that any eyes witnessed our avocations, or I should perhaps have been more studious of my attitudes when I lie down to read!"—"Oh, indeed I shall be sorry if your discovery of our telescope should induce any of you to alter your manners out of doors; for," added Mr Russel, "I never saw such a picture of happiness and elegant recreation as your family affords; we are never tired of looking at you; my boy and girl, to say nothing of my wife and myself, have longed to

become acquainted with you."—"And that's true, indeed," added Mrs R. with a sincere and friendly smile, which her son and daughter caught, and gave their young guests: "You are so notable, ma'am, (to Mrs W.) "that it quite astonishes me, considering your London life; and you, my dear miss Warner, are quite my little girl's admiration, you work and read so much; and you, master William, have made Tom quite a gardener; in short, I cannot express how much I have longed for this very agreeable introduction, for which I sincerly thank you, my dear and valued old friend," continued she, turning to Mr Clare.—"Aye, they are not persons of whom you will soon tire, I prophesy;" replied he, nodding kindly: "Tom, have you seen the chaise? if your *Rumpus* was but more steady, what famous rides you could take with your new friends!" "Can you ride, Miss Warner?" timidly asked Jane of her young guest; "because I have a side saddle, which you shall be welcome to, if you want one."—"Oh, no! I am very much obliged to you, I never tried; in London it was not thought of, and we have only had pretty Claret one day, you know; I say you know, for I suppose you saw my uncle drive him home for us, last evening!"—"And I was just going to be so stupid as to say, I suppose you heard us christen him *Claret*!" said George.—"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted Tom!—"What's that which so delights the young ones?" said Mr Clare, who had been attending to a conversation with the elders of the party; they told him George's odd remark.—"Ah! that reminds me of the story of an Irishman who was shown a church through a telescope, when he burst

out: 'Och! by the powers, how plain I see it; I can even hear the organ playing!!'"

This old anecdote, which they had never heard before, set the young ones all off into a hearty laugh, in which the rest joined; for Mr Clare had so pleasant a way of relating an anecdote, that it was always a treat to listen to him. "May Tom take his young companions to see his bees, and Rumpus?" said Mr C. to Mr Russel. "Oh, by all means; aye, and I dare say they will like to go in the hay-field I cut the day before yesterday, and the little dears at home would like a tumble in the hay, I dare say."—"Oh dear, Mrs Warner, will you let them all come to tea, this evening? and they shall have a syllabub, and better still—will you, my dear madam, and your good gentleman, and our old friend come also? convince us that you will be kind enough to waive ceremony, as we do;—in truth we know nothing about it; nor do I wish; for I have, in my simple life—(to be sure it has always been passed in the country, but even there we may find a sufficient variety of characters, if we will but notice them) I say, that I have always observed that, where there is much ceremony there is no friendship; that just in proportion to the quantity of etiquette, is the want of cordiality and comfort. Give me sincerity, however homely the reception."

Mrs W. smiled her approval of her warm-hearted neighbour's observation, and thought how much more real enjoyment might be passed in her society, plain and simple as she was, than in that of any of the fashionable, selfish, cold-hearted beings, among whom she had

lost so many years of her life. She readily promised Mrs R. to come, with all her family. Mrs W. found that the gentlemen had already settled it; but she feared so great a number of children would be too noisy for her new friend:—" oh no! not if there were ten times the number; if children are not absolutely unruly and disagreeable, I care not how many I have around me."—" Dame Warner! dame Russel! harkye!" said Mr Clare, coming to them, as they sat chatting; " I want, unknown to the children, to plan with you a gipsying party: they had better know nothing of it till the very day, because, if any unforeseen accident should delay it, they will be so much disappointed; and I hate that children should have any drawback on their little comforts: I wish to know if we can accomplish a rural dinner, in a few days time?—A ham, and fowls, and cheese, and bread, and fruit, and biscuits, and a huge cake, and cider, and wine, and all that sort of thing, will feast us luxuriously: I will come to Fairview, in a post chaise, which will take those who cannot be accommodated in your tilted cart and Warner's chaise; and we will go to Pine Cop, instead of the top of Malvern; they have all been to the latter, but the beautifull knoll of Pine Cop lies, you know, quite the other way; Mrs Russel and our friends have not seen it; besides, not being so high as Malvern, it will not be so cold, nor so laborious to climb; we shall be shaded by the fine trees that give the name to the spot, and the fern that grows there will supply fuel for a fire. There will be no fun, you know without a fire: all children love the excitation and anxiety that a bonfire, made of light materials,

ever causes; and we can roast potatoes, or toast cheese, or fry ham, or any thing to amuse them. Poor Mrs Emma, here, has no idea of the exceeding pleasure that such a party as ours (I hope will be) can afford." —"Really this promises well, I must say, and I gladly extend my circle of enjoyment to my friends, whom you know, this morning only, admitted my own breakfast table party!" replied Mrs W. "Bless me, my love, it is one o'clock," exclaimed Mr Warner! "I fear we are trespassing on our friends' time; allow us to summon the children."—"Oh, I'll do that," said Mr Clare, "Will, Tom!" shouted he, out of the window, as he saw them all four chasing one another round and over the hay-cocks, in the pretty meadow by the side of the house. They came in, panting and laughing, and were sorry the summons was for them to separate. The visitors took leave, with a promise to return in the evening, and to bring the younger ones; and away they went back again to Fairview.

The long-talked-of gipsying party was put off for nearly a month, in consequence of George having sprained his ancle while he was mounting Claret; his foot turned in the stirrup; and he would have fallen, had not his mother caught him, as he reeled off the pony with the pain it caused him. His uncle was with him also, and they carried him into the house, where he was confined for several days; then, as the fine weather continued, he was lifted out, on the sofa, on to the lawn, every day, and placed under the shade of the trees, and as the sun came round, his sister and brothers wheeled him into the shade. Here he lay,—

the most patient, and the happiest boy in the world; for all the family endeavoured to amuse him. Mr Clare came one day with a load of books, which were a source of entertainment to every one. Emma's delight was to sit and work by George, while he read, or to read to him when he was tired. When he had been on the sofa a few days, his uncle became so much better that he was allowed to walk a little; and Emma was at hand always to assist him: they managed so carefully to prevent any farther accident that, in another week, it was as well as ever; and Mr Clare finding, one morning when he went over to the cottage, that there was nothing to prevent the party from going to Pine Cop, he arranged with Mrs Warner to start the next day at eleven o'clock. As soon as dinner was over, Mr Clare returned home, "to put Mrs Mudge in a bustle," as he smilingly told Mrs Warner; "how amazed she will be to find she is to dress one of her nicely papered hams to-night, but you know she must, or it will not be cold in time to take with us. Good bye! good bye, all!" said he, as he trudged along the shrubbery walk; and down rushed the children after him, to shake hands, and to know when he would come again. "Oh, to-morrow, my dears, and then—but farewell! farewell!" and away he went. Emma was summoned by her mother to get out of the store-closet the ingredients for a cake, for Mrs W. made a point of teaching her every thing that was useful in the house, according to her capacity; and she was so quick, and notable, and desirous of being an assistance to her mother, that it was a pleasure as well as a duty to instruct her. "Now,

my love, get me some currants, a nutmeg, some alspice, sugar, and carraway seeds; and, with Mary's help, we shall be able I dare say to make a cake that will please all who love a plain one. I know your father and uncle will like it much better than those rich ones that we used to have in London."—"What like the twelfth cake, mamma, that you ordered for us last winter, when we had John and Rosa Nugent, and Sarah, and Stephen, and Richard Price, to draw king and queen with us? Oh, what a disagreeable evening we had! I remember you were obliged to leave us soon after they came, to go to the Opera, and then they behaved so rudely, though Miss Stock was there to be in your place;* she let Stephen eat so much cake, I recollect, that he was quite sick; and Richard *would* have three glasses of wine; for he said he had seen his father drink fifteen, for he had counted them; and he was sure if fifteen were a proper quantity for his father, three could not hurt him; and after he had drank them, he was so cross, and quarrelsome, and stupid, that he made us all quite uncomfortable; and he would bring me more wine; and then he fell over the footstool that Alfred was sitting on (Edgar was in bed) and broke the glass, and spilled the wine all down Alfred's back, and stained his pretty little pale blue kerseymere frock; you remember that pretty frock, mamma; and oh, how Alfred did cry! and he was so wet that he was obliged to go to bed; and then Miss Stock was *so* cross, and rang the bell for

* Miss Stock was an useful, but not very faithful young person, whom Mrs W. sometimes sent for, to take her place, as in this instance, when she went from home.

Sidney; and when he came up, he would not pick up the glass, but said Rachael could, when she swept the room in the morning; 'he hated stooping, above every thing,' he said; 'for the points of his collar always turned down so over his neckerchief,' and then Miss Stock laughed at him so, and away he went, laughing too; and then George and I picked up the glass, and by that time Richard was fast asleep on two chairs; and—oh! what an uncomfortable evening it was; and I was quite glad when the two footmen came to fetch them all five away. I liked Rosa the best, but then she was proud, and so different from Jane Russel!"—"Why, Emma, I never heard a word of this disastrous evening," said Mrs Warner, who had been picking the currants with the little girl, while she chatted away to her mother. "No, mamma, for I remember you had a dreadful head-ache the next day; you took cold coming out of the 'crush room' of the opera; so I heard Miss Stock tell Jane; and I wanted to know what it meant, for I was somehow afraid it was a horrid place, that persons were obliged to pass through before they could get to the opera; but she would not stay to answer me, and said, what could I know about such places;—she must go and see if Dr Marlowe had allowed you to take a little chicken broth, that she might give orders about it: and your cold lasted several days, so neither Jane nor Mary would let me go down to your room; and when I did see you, I had forgotten all about twelfth night."

Mrs Warner sighed over this picture of her late London life; and kissing her little girl, said, "I am hap-

pier, now, my dear child, a thousand times, with all my anxiety on account of our poverty, than I ever was during the time I passed in the fashionable world (as it is called) and I hope that the example you have seen in me will teach you to avoid a similar life, should your fortune be ever so large."—"Dear, dear mamma!" cried the affectionate child, "do not find fault with yourself! only think how much happier we are than if we had never lived in London, because you know—because now——" Her mother knew what she meant, and saw she could not express herself; "because we should not have enjoyed the contrast, do you mean?" "Yes, mamma, that is it; don't you think so?—Oh, here comes Mary, with the flour, and butter, and eggs, and—what is that in the cup? yeast, I declare! I thought you baked yesterday, Mary? do they always put yeast in cakes?"—"Oh no, miss Emma, only in these light cakes."—"Well, but mamma, why are we going to have a cake?"—"You will see to-morrow; come, let us make haste." The cake was soon finished, baked, and admired; and then set by for "to-morrow."

The next morning was bright and hot, as it had been for several weeks; and Mrs W. was rejoiced when she reflected that all were going to ride through the heat of the day; walking would have been toilsome and imprudent. At breakfast, the children were told of the projected treat, and most delighted they were: not that they by any means understood the exact meaning of the term; but their uncle had proposed it; a *cake* was to be of the party;—and it was something new!—"I do think there are the Russels, in their van, or fly, or

cart, or whatever it is called," said Mr W., "and Mr Clare will soon be here; we had better harness Claret." "I'll run and wrap the cake up," said Emma; "but is that all we are going to take to eat?"—"Goodness, no! look at Tom Russel," said William, "pulling out a great basket from the cart; I must run down and help him."—"Where's my straw hat?" said Edgar. "Mayn't I take my whip and ball?" asked Alfred. "Mary, you must get ready, and go with us," said Mrs W., "Mrs Dobson will take care of the house."—"Oh, thank you, ma'am," said the good-natured girl, and the colour came into her cheeks; "but had I not better put up some bread and cheese, and knives and forks, and take a large stone bottle for water; I dare say there will be some house near, where we may beg some?"—"I suppose so, Mary, but I cannot tell, till Mr Clare arrives, what he will provide: oh, here comes the chaise; you can go in the dickey, for Tom Tyley rides, I see."

"So, so! what a goodly assembly; bless me! what a bustle!—Good morning to ye, friend Russel!—well, here I am, quite punctual, you see;—what, all ready! —that's right!—now then!——" "Stop, stop, my dear uncle," said Mrs Warner, as she hastened out to meet her friends; "I am quite 'at fault,' as the sportsmen say; I cannot tell what we are to take?"—"Oh, take! —why take a few nice clean cabbage leaves,—Adam's plates, Emma;—and a loving cup;—no! I've brought one;—a few knives and forks, and two or three tumblers; that's all.—Mrs Russel, what have you brought?" —"Oh, a couple of roasted fowls, and a pigeon pie,

and some potatoes to roast, as you proposed."—"Oh, then we shall do very well; only I quite forgot a cake."—"I am glad of that, uncle; for mamma and I made one yesterday afternoon," said Emma.—"Well, that is capital!—now then—we have five miles to go; let us be off as soon as we can."—"Oh, here comes papa and George, with Claret."

By twelve o'clock, the whole happy cavalcade started: Mr Russel drove his wife, Tom, Jane, and William; Mr Warner drove George, Alfred, and Emma; and Mrs Warner, with Edgar, went in the post chaise with Mr Clare, Mary mounting the dickey.

After having proceeded for two or three miles, through lanes of great beauty, catching, at intervals, views of the surrounding country; particularly of their lovely and favourite Malvern hills, they came to a private road, that ran along by the paling of an extensive park, with thriving plantations on each side of them; and here the prospect was entirely different from that which they had hitherto admired: pathways branched off from the road, and as they rapidly passed each, they saw, now magnificent trees,—now a noble sheet of water, with stately swans sailing quietly along,—now the grand palace-looking residence of the wealthy owner of these domains,—now a clump of trees,—now a cool and sombre avenue, now an eminence, fringed on one side with thick underwood, and on the other a turf slope, down which a herd of startled deer rushed headlong,—now the same beautiful animals, recovering from their fright, and gazing towards the road, whence the sound came that

had alarmed them;—and now the travellers stopped at the lodge, the principal entrance to this most lovely estate, which belonged to lord Piercefield.

"Can you accommodate a horse and pony, Mrs White, for a few hours?" said Mr Clare to a neat, civil looking woman, who came out of the tasteful lodge tying on her apron, followed by a little curly-headed boy carrying the keys of the iron gate. "Yes to be sure, sir, we can; my husband is only gone up to the house with a letter, I expect him back every minute, and then he will put them into our little stable; oh, here he comes."—"Tom Tyley, you'll set us down here, and take the chaise on to the village; get your dinner at the Red Lion, and return for us at six o'clock."—"Yes, sir," replied Tom, but I had better drive you a little ways into the park, 'tis a goodish distance to Pine Copp, and it is very hot walking."—"Aye, do so; drive us to the foot of the knoll. To this nobleman, Emma," said Mr C. "I always feel grateful, for his kindness in allowing the public to enjoy the beauties of his estate whenever they choose; I also honour his resolution not to admit impertinent idlers into his mansion, as many do; some from ostentation and 'the pride that apes humility;' and others, of course, from more kind and disinterested motives. He, I mean lord Piercefield, has as beautiful a collection of pictures as any nobleman, and he has built a gallery expressly for them away from the house; and to that building the public is admitted, but nowhere else. Unlike the 'little great,' too, he retains persons well qualified to answer the questions that the visitors may put; and which attend-

ants are strictly prohibited from receiving any money from those who go to see the pictures. But here we are, and there are the glorious old pines under which, I hope, we shall dine: see, what a steep ascent it is! steps admirably cut in the sandstone rock, so as to appear the effect of rugged toil; now winding among the brushwood, and now bringing the climber out at the edge of the precipice looking over the park! oh, 'tis an enchanting spot! I hope you will every one like it!"— "I have been so delighted with all I have seen, my dear sir," said Mrs. Warner, "that I have not been able to express my admiration; there are 'thoughts that lie too deep for words,' I am sure; but here comes Emma: what a happy looking fairy it is!" said the delighted mother, as the little girl came scudding like a lapwing towards the post chaise: "Oh, mamma, dear mamma! did you ever see any thing like this beautiful park? Oh what a sweet hill this Pine Copp is; thank you, kind uncle, for bringing us to see it," added she, as she ran round the chaise to take a basket from his hand, which he drew out from under the seat. "We must each carry a share of our 'prog,'" said Mr Russel, who now joined the chaise party, laughing and hauling a hamper along; "and I think you will all say that I do not flinch from *my* share of the duty!" And many a laugh, and a fright, and a scramble they had, each carrying something up the rugged steps to their dining room! All fairly landed, and hot, they walked about among the trees to cool themselves, and to admire the extensive and varied prospect all round them. "Look, look! I declare Mr Russell has brought his telescope!" said

William: "How glad I am!" exclaimed half a dozen voices. "Aye, the old cathedral looks well from here, I can tell you," said Mr Clare; "and the fine river too, sleeping in the hot sun; and Aberly-hill, and the Welsh mountains, in blue and misty grandeur; and our own noble hills, and the very colour of the window curtains in the grand drawing room at Piercefield Hall, may be seen."—"Aye, I was just looking at the house," said Emma, who had the telescope at her eye; "and there is a carriage driving up to the door."—"Goodness! how far is it off, uncle," said George. —"Two miles I dare say, my dear."—"Oh, and there comes a footman very much like Sidney," continued she; "and there is a lady, and now another, walking down the steps; and Sidney, I mean the footman, is handing them into the carriage! Oh, do look, Jane."—"Where can Mary be all this time?" said Mrs Warner, looking round. Tom Russell, who was stooping down over the side of the knoll, to gather a beautiful sprig of heath for Alfred, answered, "La! poor thing! here she comes, lugging a great stone pitcher up the steepest part, and she is all among the brambles!" and away darted the good-natured lad to help her carry it, and to put her in the right path. Tom was soon followed by the rest of the children; and their parents, the next minute, heard their merry shouts as they broke their tangled way through the fern, and heath, and holly bushes, and gorze, and trailing brambles, that crept across their way in every direction like prickly ropes, and threw them down. "Suppose we begin and arrange the gipsy dinner," said Mrs Russell

to her friend.—"Certainly," replied Mrs Warner; "I was thinking that it must be between two and three o'clock, and there will not be time for a stroll into the park to the aviary, which Mr Clare tells me we must go and see; the children will be so entertained." They then turned in again among the pines, and began, with Mary's assistance, to unpack the baskets of delightful viands; the table cloth was spread, and cabbage leaves (which had been carefully washed and wiped) were placed all round instead of plates; then the ham, fowls, pie, cheese, fruit, bread, biscuits, cake, salt screwed up in a piece of paper, cucumbers, melon, potted shrimps, and other 'knick knackeries' were placed about 'in most admired disorder:' "For," observed Mrs R. "the great pleasure of such a party is, its total want of etiquette and formality. Now, one of the gentlemen must come and draw the corks of the wine and cider, and the children must be called; I wonder if they are to light their fire before or after dinner?"—"Oh, before to be sure, or else how are they to roast their potatoes," replied Mrs W. laughing; "and here they come with their frocks and handkerchiefs full of fuel, they look half '*done*' themselves; but there is a sweet air has just sprung up, that will make it very pleasant."—"Now, mamma, how are we to light our fire?" asked George.—"Oh, I know," said Jane; "papa brought his burning glass, and it is with the tobacco in a little basket; I'll fetch it:" and she soon returned with it. The dried fern and old leaves that had lain snugly lodged among the bushes ever since the last winter, were now heaped lightly on the grass, a

little way under the trees, where the fern would not grow; and the young Warners, to whom this mode of obtaining fire was quite new, looked on with great delight, and watched the expert manner in which Tom directed the sun's rays upon a piece of paper among the fuel; the blue smoke soon appeared, and then the red edges eating their way round the little hole which the focus had made; then a gentle puff of wind came, and blew the whole into a flame which quivered to and fro, the fern crackling, and the smoke rolling away down the steep sides of the knoll. The dry heap was soon consumed, and then the hungry flame crept away for more food (as it seemed), and the grass all round quickly disappeared and turned black; and the space of fire became larger, and spread to the feet of the party that was gathered round it, and then caught a clump of fern: then a low roaring sound was heard, and the flames increased and looked like thin, angry, fiery tongues coming out of the earth, and licking up the beautiful vegetation on the ground; and the roaring increased; and the wind blew the busy dreadful flaming waves, towards the underwood that grew all down the knoll, and extended towards a copse wood in the park, which looked like a sea of trees. The danger of their situation now struck both ladies, who at once saw that the fire in another minute would be beyond controul; and they called to the three gentlemen, who were talking on the other side of the trees, to 'come instantly!' The children caught their mother's terror, and now became aware of the frightful extent to which their little pretty plaything of a fire had gone; and some shrieked

and ran away, while the two elder boys stamped on it and beat it with their hats. The gentlemen saw with alarm, in an instant, the fearful consequences; and while Mr Russel leaped over the fire, and began tearing up the fern from the roots on the side towards which the wind drove the flames, Mr Warner, snatching up the cloth in which the bread had been tied, wrapped it hastily around his face to keep it from being burned, and courageously threw himself on the ground, rolling over and over on the heated surface. Mr Clare fortunately had his walking stick, and scatching off his coat, he twisted it round the end of it, and beat the flames with all his might to extinguish them, but all in vain! as the savage enemy was quelled in one part, it showed itself in another; when Mary, as white as her own cap with fright, caught up the two gallon pitcher of water, which she had fortunately requested the woman at the lodge to give her, and poured it carefully and judiciously all round the edge of the burning ring; and in another minute nothing remained of the cause of their terror, but the black and white sullen looking ashes in a circle extending several feet!* Mr Clare was the first to recover from the terror into which they had been thrown, and strongly advised a glass of wine all round, to recruit their spirits. No harm was done, though frightful consequences might have ensued from the spreading of the fire over a surface of ground parched by hot weather of many weeks duration.

* The above alarming commencement to a social gipsying party, actually occurred during one of the late hot summers.

Tom had burnt a hole in his straw hat, and Mr Warner's nankeens had suffered; his coat, too, was well powdered with white ashes; so to raise the spirits of the children, the gentlemen exerted themselves to make them forget their fright, and joked Mr W. upon his miller-like appearance. In a less time than could have been expected, the whole party was seated, or reclining 'divan fashion,' round their rural dinner; alternately laughing, joking, eating, drinking, and admiring; then listening to the grave voice of the summer air whispering among the lofty pines above them. "How like the solemn noise of the never-silent sea," observed Mrs Warner.—"I have not yet seen the sea," replied Mrs Russell.—"Shut your eyes and listen," resumed Mrs W., "and you may imagine yourself within a hundred yards of its grand presence."—"'Tis very mournful," observed her friend.—"Yes, and so is the voice of the sea; it always appears to be moaning, murmuring, or raging; oh, it is a glorious but fearful object!" replied Mrs W.; "but the gentlemen are talking of the aviary; come, let us assist Mary to repack, and then we will join them." The aviary contained a pair of cassowaries, enormous birds of the ostrich kind that ran with the swiftness of a race horse, stood six feet in height, and had no wings; their appearance when running was very grotesque, and made the children laugh exceedingly; Mary noticed to Emma, that they looked like mops going about: golden pheasants gliding in and out among the shrubs, glancing like rainbows in the sunlight, pleased all the party. A pair of kangaroos were also gambolling about; though they were

not birds, William observed, so the place should not be called an aviary: the extraordinary formation of their fore legs and wonderful tails, struck the party with astonishment. They had not time, however, to explore any farther, for the sun was declining, and they had yet to walk back to Pine Copp, and to harness the horses. In half an hour more they were all on their way home again, delighted and tired; and the children all found themselves as glad to go to bed after their day's enjoyment, as if they had been hard at work, and were worn out with toil.

The autumn drew on, and the family were more in the house; for hitherto they had almost lived in the open air. Jane Russell was staying with Emma for a week; and one day as they sat working by the fire, and the rain drove against the windows, and the leaves were hurrying about like terrified birds that could find no resting place; Jane said, "I think before long, Emma, your great fondness for the country will begin to grow less, and you will wish yourself back in London again, where such a wide dreary prospect as this is never to be seen!" "How can you think so, Jane? Oh no! In half an hour these clouds may all be driven away, and the cheerful sun may break forth, and the dear hill may peep out again from the mist that now hides it, and I shall be as glad to see it again, as I am to see you after a little absence; then the gravel walks soon dry, and we can run about the garden:—oh, when could I see any thing in London that would be so beautiful and delightful as all this?"—"Yes, but you were young when you lived there, you know; and you

were not so much with your parents, whom you love so; and you are more happy here, because your manner of living is more to your taste; but suppose this house, and every thing, just as it is now, were to be taken up by a fairy, and put down in London, should you not like it then?"—"No!—Birds, bees, flowers, fields, trees, hills, new mown hay, bean fields, clear air, prospects, beautiful clouds; country walks, to gather violets, to see the lambs, to gather blackberries, to go nutting, to scramble up the Malvern, to—oh, Jane, Jane! I hope we shall never go to London again!"—"Well, I'm sure I don't wish you to go, for I should be very grieved to part with you; but I think you are too severe against poor London."—"Severe! ah, my dear girl, you have never been jostled along its dirty streets, covered with blacks from the thousands of chimnies, stifled with brown fogs, had your head ache with the noise of the thousands of great ugly carts!—" "Stop, stop!" said Jane, laughing good-humouredly at Emma's serious face which was turned full upon her; considering that you have been jostled, and stifled, and half killed, I think you look wonderfully well; and I should not mind being made to suffer all you have gone through; (here Emma raised her hands, and eyes, and work, and all, in astonishment, which made Jane laugh ten times more) "Yes, all you have suffered," repeated she, as soon as she could speak, "in order to judge for myself. You know your mamma told you the other day, when you asked her if there were such things as ghosts, that if you ever had an opportunity of 'judging for yourself,' you should never neglect it, and that if your senses

were clear and free from prejudice, or the folly of others, you would find that there are no such things; and so I should like to keep myself free from your prejudice, dear Emma, and judge for myself; and do you know, I am going to London with my aunt Forbes who lives at Ludlow; she intends to stay there for a month, and she is so kind as to offer to take me, and my father and mother are so good as to spare me; for they say another opportunity would not again occur; so now, you see, I shall judge for myself. Emma sat amazed; pity for her friend was certainly her first feeling when she began to recover her surprise, and pity for herself the next, because she was going to lose the society of Jane —the mild and sweet-tempered Jane; and so she told her. This affliction, however, was soon lessened by Jane's promising to write often to Emma during her absence, and faithfully to inform her of all her likes and dislikes in 'the hateful place!'

Emma, however, could not let the subject drop; it would look too much like being convinced that her friend was right; so she was beginning to argue on her favourite side of the question, when her mother came in to remind them that it was time they altered their dress for dinner. "A reduced fortune," she once observed, "was not to induce careless and untidy habits;" therefore the plain frock of her little girl was always changed before dinner, if soiled; and her shining hair neatly arranged in easy curls: no ornaments or trimmings were ever worn by either mother or daughter. Jane Russell had no occasion to be equally plain, and she dressed as other girls in her station were accustomed

to dress: but no envy, or wish to vie with her young friend, ever annoyed Emma.

"Come, my dears, Mary is laying the cloth."—"Oh, Mrs Warner, before we go, tell me if you do not think Emma too much prejudiced against London?" said Jane. "Yes, my love, I think she is, but——" "What, *mamma* against me!" said Emma, with a half reproachful look. "But I was going to say," continued her mother, that she is too young to be a proper judge of the matter, and she has, beyond a doubt, but little reason to like it; (Emma's countenance brightened) I never could have believed, till I had tried it, that a country life possesses so many charms, so much more solid enjoyment; (Emma actually jumped with delight) but if I were rich, I should certainly pass three months of every year in the 'dreadful place;' (Emma sat down in despair) for I consider, my dear Jane, that no spot possesses such advantages, no place affords such opportunities for improvement, for education, for intellectual enjoyment, for early and easy intercourse with all that is worth knowing in the world of literature." This was a view of the subject which Emma had never taken; she felt the truth of all her mother said, and took her hand, which she kissed and held in silence, while Mrs Warner concluded; "to a contented mind, my dear girls, there are few situations in life in which we may not enjoy a share,—a large share of happiness; every spot, beautiful or ugly, has its advantages, and disadvantages, and (whatever Emma may think to the contrary) millions *prefer* town to country.

But little remains to be told of this happy family.—

Emma had long and frequent letters from her friend Jane, in which the agreeables and disagreeables of London were so fairly stated, that Emma, though still, and ever preferring the country, confessed that she might like the great city, for an occasional residence. After her young friend's return, they became inseparable companions; the advantages that Jane derived from Mrs Warner's elegant manners and instructions, which she bestowed on both the girls equally, were very serviceable; and Mr and Mrs Russell gratefully thanked her for her kindness. The dear, good, kind uncle Clare could not keep to his resolution of visiting at Fairview, but, overcome by the wishes of the whole family, he went to live with them entirely. And, what a jubilee his arrival caused! William became a tasteful and clever youth in his favourite occupation; and George followed the example of his friend Tom Russel, and turned farmer. Mrs Mudge came to the cottage with her master; and was kindly allowed to fancy herself of great use as a housekeeper.

Other horses came into the family, as the children grew up, and were fond of riding; but Claret, the gentle, beautiful Claret remained with his fond friends till old age fairly wore him away.

Mary must not be forgotten: she lived for many years at Fairview, was a faithful, respectful, and attached friend, as well as servant; her love for the neighbourhood of Malvern nearly equalled that of her young mistress; whom she sometimes reminded of the pleasure they both felt, on leaving town for the country.

THE

CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE.

TALE THE FOURTH.

THE WITCH.

ELLEN, George, and Alfred Weston were sitting after breakfast, one morning in June, with their parents, and talking of the long promised treat to Vauxhall, when the postman's knock, and the footman's entrance with a letter, interrupted the pleasant arrangements which were nearly settled, for the whole family, and their young friends, the Fords, to go on the following evening to that splendid scene, Vauxhall Gardens. Their father read the letter aloud; it was from a Mr Merton, an apothecary in Wiltshire, who lived near their grandmother's large old farm: she had been unwell, and he had attended her for some time, and now he wrote to request that Mr Weston would come down, as the old lady was getting worse. "My mother has long wished us all to come; and even now, you see, my dear," said

Mr W. to his wife, " she desires Mr M. to beg that I will bring the whole family; so suppose we get ready, and start for Smallridge farm, in a few days."—" I see no objection, my love," replied Mrs Weston; and thus the matter was settled.

The children looked at each other with sad disappointment in their countenances, for they felt sure that there would now be no time for Vauxhall; but Ellen and Alfred were too gentle to show any displeasure at an event that could not be prevented. George, the elder boy, was rude and surly, and displayed so much anger that he was sent up into the nursery, to recover his good temper, alone, while his brother and sister drove out on the heath, in a " pony fly." The family lived at Blackheath. Nurse Jarvis was the only servant who was to go with them to Smallridge farm. The young ones begged to ride outside the coach with her, and as the day was fine, they were allowed. Excepting a few quarrels, occasioned by George's overbearing temper, the day passed pleasantly on the roof of the coach; and the travellers, having taken post chaises at Devizes, to convey them the remaining ten miles, they found themselves rattling, jolting, and swinging down a rough narrow cart road which led to the farm, at nine o'clock, on a fine summer evening.

Old Mrs Weston had been informed of the time when she might expect them; and she was seated in the parlour, with her bible open, on a little round table, waiting their arrival. The long, low casement window was hooked open, and admitted the fragrant scent of a huge lime tree, that stood in the fore court, and

shadowed the venerable building with its branches. The room was dark and gloomy, for the summer sun had set, and the old lady's time for retiring to rest had past, before the travellers arrived. The business of the farm was over for the day; cows, pigs, poultry, men, horses, dogs, were all silent. The servant, Hannah, was leaning over the low gate of the court, talking to Roger, the carter, when she heard the rattling of wheels down the stony road:—in she rushed to spread the news; the old lady's nap was disturbed; the fowls that were roasting were left to scorch, while Betty ran out to look; Roger opened the gate, and stayed to assist in bringing in the luggage; and in five minutes the feeble old mother had kissed her son, and welcomed her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, whom she had never seen.

Mr Weston was shocked when he saw how ill his mother looked: he had not seen her since his father's death, which had happened three years before; then he left her stout and strong, and able to attend to the large dairy, in which she took such pride: now she was pale and thin; and her hair had become quite grey. "I am glad thee art come, George," said she; "I couldn't have kept about house much longer, and then what would have become of the concerns?"—"We will talk over every thing relating to business to-morrow, my dear mother; let us now think of your supper, that you may go to bed; I am afraid we have kept you up beyond your usual time: you look fatigued," observed her son, tenderly. "Oh, I had my bit of bread and cheese above an hour ago; but I would not go to bed

till I had seen ye," said she; "but if thou'lt ask thy good lady to excuse me, I'll say good night now. Here be the keys; now thee beest come, I shall not trouble about any thing, but keep myself quiet, and wait patiently, till it please God to take me! Good night, my dear boy!" added she, rising with difficulty from her easy chair; "Betty will get me into bed:—time has been when I wanted no help, but old age is a poor companion to one who has been used to bustle about." —— And she continued to talk in the same strain as she took her son's arm, and tottered into the kitchen, to Betty. Mr Weston had no idea that he should find his poor mother so weak and ill. He returned to the gloomy old parlour, and sat down, in great sorrow and dejection of spirit to think over the sad certainty that, in a very few months, she would be no longer living! His wife and children soon re-entered the room; and they all partook of the meal which their day's travelling rendered pleasant. The young ones were then sent to bed, and Mr. W. communicated to his wife the fears he felt respecting his poor mother. "But," said he, "I will not keep you up, my love; you have need of rest after your fatiguing journey; to-morrow we will talk farther; for I have a plan to propose to you." In another half hour, the inmates of Smallridge farm were all asleep.

At a very early hour on the following morning, the two little boys, George and Alfred, who slept in a small room, at the side of the house next to the farm yard, were awaked by the different noises of the various animals that the out-houses contained. The boys had

never had an opportinity of seeing a farm before, and they jumped out of bed to enjoy the new scene from their little casement. Betty, Roger, and an overgrown cow-boy, were already up; cows were being milked, ducks, and chickens being fed, pigs were squeaking for their breakfast, pigeons were fluttering about, an old ragged donkey was braying lustily over the gates, and geese were screaming at a wanton puppy, that was yelping and galloping round them. George, the elder lad, who was about ten years of age, proposed to his brother to finish dressing, and go down with him, that they might enjoy the fun in the yard; Alfred, being more gentle and timid, suggested that they could see the creatures a great deal better where they were; but advised that they should go into the next little room, and call Ellen, that she might have some fun too;—and away he went on his kind errand. She was as ill able to sleep, through the noises under her window, as her brothers had been; so she was dressed when Alfred came, and ready for any scheme which they might propose. They stood in the long passage, consulting on the probability of finding their way down stairs, among such curious ups and downs, and ins and outs, as appeared all about them; when an uncouth black door, up four awkward stairs opened, and their good Jarvis peeped out; she had heard their voices, and came to show them the way to the parlour. Hannah's red face, and redder arms met them at the bottom of the old oak stairs; and she volunteered to show them the "curiosities" of the place. Away they all sallied—first to the *Babel* yard; which they soon gladly left;

for that which had appeared so droll at a distance, they found a nasty, dirty, noisy, disagreeable place. The young ducks swimming about in the horse pond, "like little *bunchy* canary birds," Ellen said, "were the only pretty creatures she had seen." Then the large rambling garden was explored, which was on the other side of the house; it had been well kept during old Mr Weston's life time; but it was now in sad disorder. A venerable ivy-covered arbour, where he used to smoke his pipe, and drink his home-brewed ale, was an absolute ruin; the boughs hung over the entrance; the birds, slugs, and dead leaves had littered the inside; rustic seats had fallen down, and long, sickly grass had grown up through the openings. "What a pretty place this might be made!" said Ellen, "I wonder grandmamma does not have it set to rights."—"Lawk, muss, why mussus havn't a bin a nighst of thic place, never zin her maester have a died!" replied Hannah, quite unconscious that her strange low-country dialect was almost unintelligible to her little companions. They could just make out that their grandmother had not been there since some one had died, but who, they could not guess; for they had no notion that their grandfather would be called their grandmother's "*master!*"

Having seen all that their red-cheeked guide thought would interest them, out of doors, she proposed that they should return to the house, and she would get them a slice of bread and butter each, "for," she added, "poor little dears! how hunger'd un ust be, to be zure; un ust uv been up ever zin atween vour and vive thic

murning!"* They gladly followed the good natured girl into the vast kitchen, in preference to waiting for their bread and butter in the gloomy parlour; for their poor, feeble grandmother, as they had seen her the evening before, pale, sickly, and solemn, had, even unknown to themselves, made them dislike and avoid the room in which they had so unexpectedly witnessed her sad condition. Ellen asked if her grandmamma was come down stairs, and enquired if she was better. "No, my dear," replied Betty, she've not come down yet, she never do, now, till after breakfast; aye, puer body;" added she, in an under voice to Jarvis; "she a'n't long for these worl, I be sartain!" The children heard her, however, and their spirits were not raised by the remark. Hannah then offered to show them the dairy and cheese-rooms; so away they went down a long stone passage into a large room, where ranges of pans on wide shelves all round the walls, were filled with milk; several tubs stood round, half full of milk, which was being turned with 'rennet' to make cheese: then she showed them the presses in which the curd was squeezed to force all the whey from it, and she told them they should come after breakfast and see how the cheeses were shaped and finished, for she could not stay then, as she must get breakfast; they begged just to look into the cheese room, where they were astonished at the great numbers that were piled up, ready (as Hannah said) "to be bought up by the vector (fac-

* How hungry they must be; they must have been up ever since between four and five this morning.

tor) as do come every year; then he do zell un at the vears (fairs) round about." They thanked their good-tempered, but almost unintelligible guide; and then went into the fore court to look at the great lime tree, smell its sweet blossoms, and listen to the hum of the hundreds of bees that were hurrying all over it, and sipping its delicious sweets. They had not sat many minutes on the seat that was fixed round its stem, when they saw their father and mother coming up the same lane which they had travelled the evening before; the children did not know that their parents had left their bed-room, and they all ran off to bid them good morning, and tell them how many things Hannah had shown them.

Mr and Mrs Weston had heard the merry voices of their children in the garden, and purposely avoided taking them when they went out for a little ramble; they had several subjects to discuss which the young prattlers would have interrupted. Mr W. told his wife as they walked, that the plan which he had mentioned over night related to the children. "You see," said he, "my love, how much worse my poor mother is, than we expected to find her; I fear the noise of the young ones will be too much for her to bear; and I want to consult with you respecting the propriety of sending them to school in the neighbourhood." Mrs W. did not altogether approve of schools so far from London; she feared the children would learn to talk as the natives of the country do, and thought it would be difficult to break them of the habit; she fancied, too, that their manners would not be such as she would wish

her children to possess; but these disagreeables, she felt, ought not to be thought of when the old lady's comfort was considered; she reflected too, that if her mother should require much of her attention, the children must be neglected: she therefore consented that the two boys should go, as soon as a respectable school could be heard of; but added, "I think Ellen will be an assistance rather than a trouble to me, my love; and I should prefer her staying, at all events, for the first six months." They had just determined that this was the best arrangement, when the little groupe ran out to meet their parents. After breakfast, Mrs Weston went up to see her mother; she feared to disturb her by going earlier: she found Betty assisting her to rise, but when dressed she was too ill to leave her room; indeed she never left it again! it seemed as if her exertions to 'keep about house' till her son should arrive, had been too much for her; for she became from that very day so rapidly worse, that the boys were immediately sent off to a school on the Wiltshire Downs, about ten miles from Stapleford. Mr Weston had arranged the affair hastily, in order to prevent the disturbance (which children however good, necessarily make, when two or three are together) from annoying his mother. There were many tears shed by Alfred and Ellen at this first parting. George had been at school near Camberwell, so that the trial was not severe to him; besides, he was not so kind as his brother; was boastful, and fancied himself manly, valiant, and clever. Alfred was timid, and never affected to be otherwise. Ellen had more real courage than both of

the boys; though she possessed none of George's boastfulness, and as much gentleness as Alfred.

Mr Weston had, before he left London, ordered a pianoforte to be forwarded to Smallridge Farm; and had sent instructions to an upholsterer at Devizes, to fit up one of the empty rooms at his mother's house, ready for the reception of his wife; and as they had passed from their room on the first morning after their arrival, he had thrown open the door, and astonished as well as delighted her with this beautiful instance of his affection and attention; but she had never once touched the instrument, nor opened one of her books, during the month that she had now been at the farm; her mother required her attention, and she gave it as tenderly and willingly as if the old lady had been her dearest friend. Jarvis was an excellent nurse; Ellen too, cheered the closing scene of her grandmother's life, and endeared herself to her father and mother by the close attention and sweetness of disposition which she evinced. The little girl used to sit at the casement of the old fashioned bed-room, ready to assist her aged relative; and frequently, as she looked out upon the fast fading leaves of her favourite lime tree, and listened to the loud and difficult breathing of her dying grandmother, she used to shudder as she reflected that before many weeks should pass, that painful breathing, sad as it was, would no longer be heard! It was no secret to her that Mr Merton the medical attendant, had pronounced the recovery of the old lady to be entirely hopeless, so that Ellen's thoughts were continually poring over the melancholy subject.

She had never seen any one *dead*, and she wondered whether she could bear to look on the awful sight which that bed would shortly contain; she feared not, and was fain to run out of the room for very terror; till the recollection that her grandmother might want her cooling drink (which used to be put into her mouth with a teaspoon as she lay), restrained her. Ellen would not mention the dislike she had to be left alone in the room, lest it should cause her mother more trouble than she already had; so the heroic little girl continued to take her turn with Mrs W., Jarvis, Betty, and Hannah, in attending to her expiring relative. One morning in September she arose before the sun, and glided into the dismal room to take her usual station, while Jarvis, who had been up all night, went to lie down. The ruddy glow that spread over the east, and threw the steep downs into black masses of shade, streamed through the low casement upon the white curtains of the bed. Unlike the blythe mornings of spring, there were no birds carolling among the garden shrubs, except one little robin, hopping from bough to bough in the majestic linden tree; and sometimes with his slender feet shaking off a fragile leaf that had been loosened from its stem during the night. The noise of the farm yard had not yet commenced; and as the amiable little girl leaned out into the quiet beauty of that autumn morning, it seemed to her as if she and the social robin had all the great lonely world to themselves. She drew a large warm shawl of her mother's round her chilly shoulders, and continued to watch the brightening east as the glorious sun rolled

his golden beams over the grey expanse above her. Ellen felt her little heart heave with delight, and she wondered how all the beautiful changes of the heavens could be performed in such exceeding stillness as now surrounded her. The downs began to catch the beams of the rising sun, and showed like monstrous walls, with turfed buttresses in dark ridges to support them. Her absent brothers were remembered; she sighed for the cheerful George and kind-hearted Alfred, to share with her the many sad hours which she was obliged to pass alone; and as she gazed at the white chalk zig-zag road that was cut in the dark surface of the heights before her, and which she had been told, led to the little village where they were at school; she longed to be clambering up its side that she might see her brothers. Ellen now remembered that she ought to look if her poor grandmother required any attention; so she withdrew from the fresh air into the cheerless room. Ellen quietly pulled aside the curtain, and the broad glare of the sun fell full upon the pale venerable face that rested on the pillow. "How quietly she sleeps," thought the little girl; "how still she lies! Oh! can she be dead? if she *is* then, (shocking as the sight is) I am glad I have had courage to stay with her, and to look at *death!*" She dropped the curtain, and stole out of the room with as noiseless a step as if she could have disturbed the cold quiet inmate of the bed!

Uncertain whether to rouse her parents, she thought she had better call Betty; so, the only one moving in the silent house, she crept up the creaking stairs to the servants' room. They were just preparing to rise, when

the pale face of the little courageous girl peeped in at their door; she soon told her mournful tale, then sat down on the bed and wept freely. Ellen in after life often thought of that sad morning, and always with gratitude; so many trials await humanity, and woman has so much depending on her exertions in domestic afflictions, that an early acquaintance with that common lot—a firm courage to look upon death—is not only desirable, but nearly indispensable! Now that there was no necessity for exertion and attention, Mr Weston insisted that his wife and daughter, accompanied by Jarvis, should set off on the very day that his mother died, to the nearest watering place, in order that they might recruit their spirits. Mrs W. talked of the strange appearance it would have among their neighbours; but her husband only replied, that he was astonished that she who had so much good sense, who had performed her duty in so exemplary a manner, should talk of appearances. "Whom can you injure, my dear Marian, by leaving this house? Why should you *tkink* even of the meddling gossip that is ever going on in country villages on all occasions? I beg you will oblige me, and attend to your own health, in preference to trying to gain a kind remark from old Stubbs the woodman, and his chattering wife! Besides, Ellen requires change of scene; that melancholy sight which she witnessed this morning, added to her close attendance on my poor mother, have been almost too much for her. I did not expect that the life of her grandmother would close so suddenly, or she should not have been exposed to a sight so shocking to the feelings of a sensitive child!"—"*I* also grieve, my

love, for the dear girl; and I confess that I would not either have exposed her to the shock she has received, though I can scarcely fail to rejoice that an inevitable event has been witnessed by her: but I will go immediately and pack up—our mourning can be made at Weymouth." In four hours they were off.

The travellers had been nearly three weeks at the sea-side, had recovered their spirits and seen all that was beautiful in and about the town, when one evening they sat enjoying themselves by the fire,—for October was far advanced; now chatting, now reading to each other the beautiful tales in "Mrs Leicester's School;" now listening to the rising wind and raging billows of a spring tide, that dashed over the esplanade; Mrs Weston said, "To-morrow, Ellen, will surely be wet; we shall not be able to go over the ferry to Portland, as I had intended; you have finished your favourite book, and completed all the broad hems of the muslin frills and collars, as well as your bead purse for papa; what will you contrive by way of amusement?"—"I don't know, mamma," replied Ellen; "I am not afraid though, of finding my time hang heavily; you know so much that is wise and entertaining, and are so kind, that I am never so well pleased as when I am talking to you; and if papa and my brothers were here with us, I should be I really think, *too* happy!"—"Well, but love, we cannot always talk; I wish, for instance to-morrow, to write a long letter to your father, and one or two to London, so that you will be quite left to yourself; oh! I'll tell you what you can do, write to your brothers!"—"Oh dear! what a delightful thought! thank you, kind mamma, for telling me of it. Oh, so

I will! and it shall be such a long letter! we must have some of that great huge writing paper, as big as the old picture bible; for I shall have so much to tell them, and I write so large, that the common-sized paper will not hold half!" Her mother smiled, and they continued to talk of Ellen's grand undertaking all the time they sat over their shrimps and bread and butter; when the supper tray was removed, the little eager girl bustled about to get all the materials together for her exploit the next day. Her mother sat quietly reading, while Ellen ran up stairs for her silver pencil case, and down stairs to Jarvis for the little inkstand; then to the table drawer for blotting paper, and to her work-box for an atom of Indian rubber; then to her mother's dressing case for her penknife; but what should she do for a ruler? In her difficulty she had recourse to Jarvis, who was so fortunate as to recollect that the flat Tunbridge-ware mesh, that was used to put through the mourning hems, and which had been bought at the library the preceding week, would be a capital substitute. With no little pleasure, Ellen displayed her materials to her mother; all were complete, excepting the "elephant paper," and that Jarvis was to procure, in the morning.

The wet weather lasted two whole days, and Ellen's letter kindly required as long a time to complete; so that, on the third morning, she awoke to a brilliant sun, sparkling on the restless waters of the bright and pretty bay, and at the same moment recollected that her long letter was finished, and would, in a few hours, be on its way to the little village of Hilton, on the wild Wiltshire Downs. This was Ellen's letter.

"Weymouth, Oct. 15th, 182—.

"My dear brothers,

"How surprised you will be when you see a letter from me, and find that I write it from *Weymouth;* that is, if papa did not tell you that mamma, and Jarvis, and I, were come away from Smallridge farm for a few weeks; for he (that is, papa) wrote a letter to mamma a few days after we came, to say that he had sent you your black clothes: so, you know all about poor grandmamma, and so I will not make you both sad by telling you any thing of her.

"When we came over the dreary wide downs, that reach a great way beyond Dorchester (which is a very old town, mamma told me, *and was a town even in the time of the Romans!* only think of that! and there I saw the old encampment, where the soldiers used to be stationed) well, I thought of you both, and wished I was going to Hilton instead of coming here; and I wondered if the Wiltshire Downs are like these Downs, and if there are great *bumps* all over them, as there are here; where mamma says, it is supposed the British chiefs were buried who fell in battle; because when they (that is, these lumps, that are called barrows) are dug up, there are bones, and old swords, and things always found. How odd! not to be buried in churches, or church yards! but I suppose there were no such places then; only I forgot to ask mamma that; and she is busy writing now, and I won't disturb her: and it is so wet that I can't go to the library, to find all about it in the 'History of Dorsetshire,' which I looked into yesterday: for we have subscribed to the circulating library; and do you know, they have books there that

I can read and understand: I always thought the books were only for grown people. Well, when you come at Christmas, you must tell me every thing about your Downs, and your school, and if you are happy; only I should like to know that now! oh, how often I wish for you both to be here! I run upon the sands, when the tide is out; but you can't understand how that is, till I see you to tell you, for I shall fill my paper too soon, if I say how it is now. Dear mamma is so kind to me!—we go out together, and sit at home together, and she knows such a number of curious and pleasant things, that it is quite delightful to be so much with her; I never was, till since we have been at dear Weymouth; and I shall be very sorry when we go back to Blackheath, for that reason; I mean, that we have so many friends there, that she cannot spare time to be much with me. We are going on the water, just a *leetle tiny* way out, from the *Esplanade* (which is a very nice, dry walk, close to the sea, that sometimes dashes over it;—it did last night, and Mrs Cross, the owner of the house where we live, tells Jarvis that it will come higher, and dash farther to-day, at high water, if the wind does not drop: I hope it may go down, for every gust shakes the house so! (the walls don't look thicker than your Latin dictionary, George) I meant to say, though, that we shall not go on the water till papa comes.

"Dear me! I have got to the folds of this great paper already, and have not said half, no nor a quarter that I wished. Mamma desires her kind love to you both, and hopes you are good boys; and she says she shall

send you a monstrous cake, and a bottle of currant wine, on papa's birthday, the 10th of November, you know. We shall be at the farm before then, so perhaps I may write again. I like it very much indeed; I mean, writing to you; and I hope my letter will be pleasant to you both.

"And mamma has not helped me; only tells me she shall just look if my *stops* are all right: so now, dear brothers, I have only just room left to say, that I am

"Your affectionate sister,

"ELLEN WESTON."

In a few days after Ellen's letter was sent, Mr Weston arrived at Weymouth, stayed a week, and then returned with his wife and daughter to Smallridge farm.

About a fortnight after the promised cake had been sent off to Hilton, old Stubbs, the woodman (who also acted as postman to the farm) brought a letter from the Stapleford post-office, directed, in a large round hand, to Mrs Weston; she opened it, and read

"Dear Mother, *(written in small text!)*

"I take up my pen to inform you that we are quite well, and hope you, and all at home are the same. We hope, when we return, that you will find we have made great improvement in the various branches of our education. Our vacation will commence on the 18 thof next month; when we hope to meet you in the enjoyment of good health.

"Please to give our duty to our father, and love to

Ellen. Mr. Wiggins desires his compliments: and I am,
" Dear mother *(in text)*
" Your dutiful son,
(written very large) " GEORGE WESTON."
" P.S. Thank you for the cake, and my sister for her letter."

" What a dreadful letter!" exclaimed Ellen, to the great amusement of her father and mother. "This is no very brilliant specimen of Mr Wiggins' talents however!" exclaimed Mrs W. " Why, my dear, the letters that you wrote at school had the same assortment of handwriting in them: the fashion is a hundred years old, I should think."—" Do you mean that it is nearly such a respectable length of time since I wrote holiday letters, Marian?" said Mr Weston, laughing; at which Ellen shouted, for very mirth, and Mrs W. could not help joining in their merriment. "You'll see," added she, " if the poor little fellows do not bring home " *writing pieces*," such as the charity boys run round London and flourish about with, from door to door!"—"No, no, not so bad as that, I hope!" replied her husband: —but she was right! and when the children arrived, their mother was shocked at their appearance. Their little gentlemanly manners had all disappeared; they had contracted the provincial (or county) pronunciation; and they shouted out, as they scampered through the snow, up the fore court. " How do, mother?"— " Where's faether?" " How thee be'st grown surely, Ellen."—" Mercy on the children! how soon they have picked up the barbarous way of talking that the people

have in this country!" exclaimed Jarvis, who had run out when the post-chaise stopped.

An evening or two after the boys had returned, the whole family were seated very comfortably in the drawing room, (as Ellen would have that room called which had been furnished for her mother) Weymouth, Hilton, and many other topics were being discussed, when Mr W. said, "I have not seen your ciphering books yet; Alfred, my boy, go up stairs and fetch them; they are in your room." Alfred got up, and lighted the chamber candle that stood on a table. "My dear boy, you need not take a light; the moon shines so brightly, that you will see your way; besides I dare not trust you with that candle-stick, for fear of your dropping any sparks: Hannah will bring up the safe candle for you to take, when you go to bed." Alfred said, "then George can go with me, to see that I do not drop the sparks, mother."—"No: why should two go? Come, put out the candle, and run away."—Alfred put it out, but did not stir. "Why do you stay?" the boy looked pale and distressed, but made no reply.—"Is it possible that my once good, little, obedient boy is become obstinate?" said his father, mildly, but sorrowfully, and Alfred burst into tears. "Come to me, my dear child!" said his kind mother; "what can this mean? tell me, in a whisper, why you do not go up stairs?" added she, putting her arm round his neck, and kissing his cold cheek. Ellen sat, in mute wonderment, with her shining knitting needles lying idle in her lap; George looked full into the blazing fire, as if he knew a vast deal, when, finding that Alfred was still

silent, he said, without looking away from the cheerful blaze, "he be afeard of witches!" "Alfred! and afraid of WITCHES, above all things! Oh! ho! ho!—ha! ha! ha! ha!" shouted his father; George looked up, and laughed too, but not heartily; Ellen seemed petrified; her eyes only moved, as she turned them from one to the other. Alfred burst into a fresh fit of crying; and his mother, drawing her footstool from under the sofa, made him sit down within the fire-side circle, and rested his head on her lap, as she said, "I don't wonder your father laughed, upon my word, to hear that a *boy*, a FUTURE MAN should fear any thing so truly ridiculous! if you had been afraid of murderers, or mad bulls, or even a *savage gander*, there would have been some small excuse for you, but a *witch* of all things!—George, you of course are not so absurd; you are older than your brother, and if I recollect rightly, are rather courageous."—"Oh, I'm not afeard of witches; but the boys"—— "Don't say *afeard*, my dear; what do the simpletons say?" said his mother. "Why, they all say that there are such things, and every one in the school believes in um; and they've told us such a many things about um, that we could not help believing in um, too; and Alfred will never stir out after dusk by himself, was it ever so!"—"Then I am ashamed of him, that he has not taken pattern by your courage, George," said his father; "you say that all the boys believe in these old ladies, (George smiled) but that you are not afraid of them: I am rejoiced at your superior sense; and as I want the books from your room, you can go for them. George's smile became more like a grin by

this time; however, he got up and went out of the room. In three minutes he twitched open the door, hurried in, and said (looking as white as his shirt collar) I can't find them any where."—"You have not been to look for them," said his father. "Yes——" "Take care! remember that I will punish you more severely for a falsehood, than for any other fault. You know, and we all know that you have not stirred from the door; the old stairs creak so loudly when any person steps on them, that we should surely have heard you. Alfred, tell me the truth! is George afraid of witches?"—"Yes, fathe—papa, he is!"—"Oh, George! George! this is very sad, indeed! you tell of a weakness in your brother, which you yourself equally possess; you utter a falsehood, in order to impose upon us, and make us believe that you are superior to Alfred; you then affect a courage, though you dare not show any; and afterwards tell another falsehood, to conceal your cowardice! fie! fie upon you! boastful, silly coward!"—here George wept, as much from anger as shame. "Ellen, ring the bell; Hannah shall bring the safe candlestick, and he shall go to bed:" and away he went in disgrace. "Now Alfred," said his kind father, "come and shake hands with me. I laughed at you, because I hoped that there was no truth in the assertion; and that you merely knew that others were so foolish, without being as absurd yonrself. I see, however, that you are alarmed; and I will try if I cannot convince you that you have not the slightest cause for fear. Come, cheer up! look at me, *I* am not a witch," said he, gaily, taking the little fellow under the chin, and making him look up

in his face. The tender-hearted boy smiled, as the tears trembled in his eyes; and he sat down on the sofa, close beside his father. "Marian," said Mr Weston, "you talked last week of some capital elder wine; I think a glass to each would raise our spirits, and keep us from feeling quite so much alarm as we now suffer:" and he looked archly down at Alfred, who smiled, and pressed his father's hand. "Ellen, you have the key of the closet in the parlour, run down and get a bottle out, desire Betty to warm some, and toast some bread, which Jarvis can bring up when it is ready," said Mrs Weston. Ellen felt in her pocket for the key; it was not there; "oh, I remember," said she, "I left it on my dressing table, when I washed my hands this afternoon; I'll be down in a minute;" and away she ran up the old creaking stairs; then stamp, stamp, stamp, was heard over head. "Alfred," said his father, "you find your sister has courage to venture up stairs, alone, and in the dark; she has now heard, as well as you, that there are such things as witches; yet her courage is not lessened; she is as likely to be run over, or gobbled up, by an old dame in a red cloak, as you are; but here she comes, quite safe, you see."— "Oh, papa! I do not expect to be 'run over,' or 'gobbled up,'" replied the little boy, laughing, as he repeated the odd fancies. "Well, as soon as we have sipped our warm wine, we will have the whole matter talked over; and Ellen shall give us her opinion; and we will find out, if we can, from you (who seem to understand their ways of annoying people) what we are to expect, and how we are to keep out of the clutches of your alarming old goodies."

The pleasant room, kind faces, and cheering wine, revived the little boy's spirits, so that he was able to tell, in a rather valiant manner, all he had heard at Hilton, on this strange subject. When he had finished, his father said, "well, but I do not find that you have seen a witch, Alfred; nor did you say that any of the boys have; nor any other persons, indeed; you have only told us that they have heard, or have been told, what pranks these wicked old women play; have you ever seen one?"—"oh, no, papa; not seen one, but it is all true that I have told you."—"That, my dear, I quite disbelieve, for——" "You do, papa?"—"Oh, yes, certainly." —"Why? la! why?" asked Alfred. "Because it is quite contrary to common sense; and to the experience of my life, and that of every person I ever met with (excepting you and George) that feeble old women, poor old women too, should like to leave their beds, or warm chimney corners, in order to go out on a winter's night, to do mischief to their neighbours." —"Yes, papa, but if they *do* go about hurting the cattle, you know—it——" "Aye, Alfred, if they do, indeed! and if you or any other person could show me a witch, in the act of injuring a cow or a sheep, I would (that is, if I could, and to oblige you!) believe in witches directly." —"But papa, said Ellen, "there must be some cause for the belief; how could any body think of such things, you know; how came the belief to have a beginning?"—"True, Ellen, there must have been a cause; and that cause was the barbarous ignorance in which all nations have, at one time or other, been sunk: the cleverest, the wisest people who ever lived, were the ancient Egyptians, and they were, perhaps,

the inventors of witchcraft, magic, and sorcery; the great mass of the people in Egypt, as well as in all other countries where printing was not known, were entirely ignorant, and consequently could be the more easily imposed on, and made to believe any absurdity, that those who had acquired knowledge, chose to teach them. The less civilized a nation is, the greater is its superstition. *We* know better than to suppose, for instance, that thunder is the voice of the Almighty, and the lightning his arrows; because *we* have acquired knowledge, and are able to find a reason for a thunder-storm, which shows the goodness, the power, and the wisdom of the Creator, in a more grand and beautiful manner, than if we attribute the natural phenomenon to his anger, as if he were a weak mortal, like ourselves. You are going to read the life of that wise man, Dr Franklin, and will there, in that book, find the cause of thunder-storms given; and the great share which he had in the discovery of electricity, which he found to be of a nature similar to that of lightning; so I will say no more on the subject than to tell you that, to this day, the wild Indians (that is, native Americans) suppose that spirits direct the changes of the seasons, hurl destruction in the whirlwinds, and ride in anger among the clouds and storms! I have told you that superstition, and the 'belief' as you call it, in spirits, ghosts, and witches, are always connected with gross ignorance; but I will prove it to your own satisfaction. You both know that, until you came down into Wiltshire, you had scarcely met with the word 'witches,' and consequently had no fear of them; you also know

that every one, however poor, with whom you ever conversed, near London, could read and write. At Mr Wiggins' school, on the contrary, I suspect there were many boys whose parents and friends can barely sign their own names (for, fifty years since, farmers' sons were brought up to follow the plough; and education was not much attended to) and now their servants and farming men certainly cannot read or write; thus you see that ignorance and superstition are found together; where one is, the other is seldom away. Ask yourselves this simple question, 'why have I not heard of the existence of witches until I came into the country?' If there are such beings, why are they not in the neighbourhood of London, as well as here? why has no one whom you know ever seen any? If we had lived in the reign of King James the First, indeed, we might have been allowed to bestow many anxious thoughts on this subject, since he himself wrote a book which he called 'Demonology,' and which, of course, described the particulars of witches and witchcraft; but James reigned in the early part of the seventeenth century; not above two hundred years after the art of printing had been introduced into England."—"Yes, papa," said Ellen; "you know *I* don't believe in witches; but I like to find out the reasons for things, and I want to know why a poor helpless old woman should be fixed on as the author of any mischief?"—"Precisely because she *is* helpless, and less able to protect herself, or to find protectors from the brutal and ignorant ferocity of man," replied her father. "Aye," replied Alfred, "but still I should like to know why

people could not be satisfied; and suppose that, if their cattle had any thing the matter with them, it might be owing to illness? now, papa, should you, if one of our cows was to fall lame, should you think a witch had done it? because some of the farmers' sons at Hilton say, that their fathers do!"—"My dear boy, what a foolish question! you know that I have told you that I have not the slightest idea that there is, or *ever was a witch in the world!*—but I dare say James Dobson would think the witches had been at work, if such an accident were to happen: but how is it that you, who made so sensible a remark just now, should have allowed these silly fears to get the better of you? You asked why people do not attribute the accidents among their cattle to rational causes?—if they were to do so, the very name of a witch would die away. Ignorant and superstitious persons are always fond of supposing, that every thing which they cannot at once account for, is supernatural, that is, out of nature; whereas, if they had sense and patience enough, they would find that there is nothing supernatural in this world. I hope, Alfred, that I have done some little good; I trust you are not quite so firm in your belief of witches as you were an hour ago; or my conversation will have been thrown away. I do not expect that your terror will at once subside, for, long after your reason is convinced, the alarm will remain: that, however, will leave you, if you exert the good sense with which the Almighty has blessed you; and try to overcome the weakness. Much depends on yourself; and I hope you will take my advice."—"I hope and think, I shall forget the

tales I have heard, papa; and I am sure I'll try and believe all that you wish me, and I will tell George, what you have said to-night; and perhaps we shall help each other to believe that there are no such things as witches. I know that I am a great deal happier, and less frightened than I was a little while ago!"— "I'll tell them a story much truer than those which Alfred heard at Hilton," said Mrs Weston, "and then they had better go to bed.— About forty years ago, a gentleman who lived far down in the country, had a very beautiful and favourite horse,— a hunter. One morning his groom came to him, before he was up, and begged to speak to him; the gentleman told him to come in, and he said, 'Sir, Hildebrand,' that was the horse's name, 'is all of a lather this morning, as if you'd rode him for thirty miles at full gallop! the stable door has been locked all night, and the key was in my waistcoat pocket.' The gentleman dressed himself in great haste, and went to look at his favourite. He was, indeed, as Joe had described, though cooler, quite in a foam! Every cause, that every body could think of, was offered as a reason for it, but none seemed to be sufficient. Mr Norton, the owner, not only saw Hildebrand shut up, on the following evening, but took the key of the stable, and the next morning he went to the horse, with the groom:—he was just in the same state, —restless, terrified, and completely wet! All, excepting Mr Norton, attributed it to the witch—for there was a poor, deformed, ugly, forlorn, old woman in the village, who was so called, and many an oath Joe swore, that if he caught her, he would be the death of her, if

witches could be killed. Well, the third morning, poor Hildebrand was as bad as ever! Joe then begged his master would allow him to stick a great many spikes into an old saddle, and put it on the horse at night, 'that the rider might find a soft seat!' Joe said: his master laughed, and told him he might. The next morning was anxiously expected; and at early dawn Joe went into the stable, for he had the keys again.—Lo! looking at the saddle, it and the spikes were covered with blood! Away flew Joe, down to old Hannah's miserable hut; dashed open the door, and found the poor woman in bed, and blood on several parts of the floor! 'Oh you wicked old hag!' said he, 'I'll teach you to ride my master's horses to death! Get up, you old wretch, and you shall be well ducked in the horse pond!' The poor, terrified, old, feeble creature had nearly died at his savage conduct. 'Oh, my poor leg,' said she, 'it is almost broken, and if you drag me out of bed, it will bleed again!'—He was proceeding to tear her out, notwithstanding, for he did not believe her, when a neighbour came in to see how she was; and then Joe found, that in the afternoon of the day before, she had fallen over her only saucepan, which she had set outside the door, and had forgotten; she had cut her leg sadly, with the rough iron of the broken handle, and had been obliged to go to bed. Joe was heartily ashamed of himself, begged her pardon, gave her a shilling, and left the hut; first asking her if she knew who had ridden his master's horse? Of course, she could not tell.

He returned home wondering who had been so torn

by the spikes, when he met one of the servants with his mistress's monkey in her arms, nearly dead with wounds on his body and legs! "Only look what some cruel wretch has done to poor Cupid!" said Sarah.—"Oh ho! Mr Cupid! what you are the jockey, are you? so you ride the horse! Well, I dare be bound you have had your last ride, my man! Where could the little toad have got into the stable?" Away he went, and traced blood through the rack up into the hay-loft, and then out at a hole where a tile had been blown off; and then all along the yard into the kitchen, where the monkey had crept. The poor thing died, and Hildebrand ever afterwards slept quietly." The children were pleased with the story, particularly Alfred: so having thanked their mother, and wished both parents 'good night,' they prepared to go to bed, Ellen laughing and encouraging her brother not to fear any thing, for that she would protect him! he took her joke with good temper, and they went merrily away together. Mrs Weston sighed as they left the room, and said, "Oh, my love, what an unfortunate circumstance it is, that we allowed the boys to go to that wild horrid school! I fear that the terrors they have felt will never wear off, but will be a source of trouble to them as long as they live; early impressions, we know, are the most vivid of our lives."—"I hope you see this matter in too serious a light: when we go back to civilized society, dear Marian," said Mr Weston, smiling, "I suspect that we shall find this silly subject of alarm will gradually vanish like the recollections of a frightful dream." "I trust it may be so," replied his wife, and the conversa-

tion dropped. The next morning George was taken into favour, and all went on happily at the farm.

The weather continued fine, clear, and calm, but severe. The boys made long slides on the pond, and tried their skill at skaiting, to the great diversion of Sam the cow boy, who stood with his hands tucked under his 'gaberdine' (or smock frock), and his round, coarse, rough hat, stuck at the back of his head, grinning over the yard gate. The cows, donkey, cart-horses, pigs, and poultry, instead of wandering over the snowy frozen fields, were shut into the large sheltered yard, which was littered all over with straw, so deep that it reached above half way up the legs of the cattle. They looked the picture of happiness with their racks full of hay, and that warm bed all about them! The pigs often amused the young people with their droll manner of enjoying themselves, groping among the straw till they were quite hidden, then up they tossed it high over their heads, when out they jumped, and away they scrambled, making such a loud rustling that it would scare the frolicsome young heifers, which joined in their sport till all were tired.

One morning, two or three days before Christmas, Mrs Weston was in the kitchen with Ellen, assisting to prepare all kinds of eatables that are peculiar to that social season; such as a huge jar of mince meats, all the 'gregeances,' as Betty called the various fruits and spices that are used in a plum pudding; pork pasties, tarts, and a monstrous cake, were among them; with a plainer cake for the farming men and servants. A fiddler was bespoken to play to them, and they were to

have a dance. Mr and Mrs Ford, and their son and daughter Arthur and Eliza, were expected from London to pass the Christmas week with their friends the Westons; they were near neighbours too, at Blackheath, and had known each other many years. On the next evening they were to arrive, Mrs W. was therefore anxious to complete all her arrangements before her guests came. The two boys were busy cutting plums and taking out the stones, and Ellen was very industriously washing the currants; Mr Weston was in the old oak parlour making a bow for the boys, of a famous bough from the yew tree that grew over the pond where the cattle drank, nearly opposite the house; when suddenly they all heard a dreadful scream, and a great uproar in the lane! In half a minute, every one belonging to the farm was on the spot, where they found a gig overthrown; two children lying on the pond, where the force of the shock had jerked them; a gentleman slowly raising himself; and the horse lying on his side, kicking violently! The travellers were Mr Merton and his son and daughter, whom he had allowed to accompany him as he was going his rounds, to see his patients. A poor man farther down the lane, no other than 'Ligee' (Elijah) Stubbs, had cut his leg with his axe; and his wife had sent their little boy to Stapleford to beg Mr Merton would come to him; the child had run without stopping at the farm to mention the accident, and fortunately a little beyond the lane, he met Mr Merton, who turned down immediately; when just as he came to the farm-yard gate, the heifers and pigs were in their

full game, and the extraordinary noise they made, with the sudden crowing of a game cock that flew upon the gate-post to escape from the frolicsome animals, terrified the horse so much, that he darted suddenly on one side, and drawing the chaise down the sloping bank of the pond, it upset and caused all the noise and confusion. Mr Merton had bruised his left shoulder against the top of the vehicle; Clara's ancle was sprained so, that she was obliged to be carried in doors; and Mr Weston having placed her on the sofa up stairs, ran down (leaving Ellen with the young sufferer) to assist at the scene of bustle. Frederick, her brother, had only grazed his cheek with a lump of ice, which had been broken out of a hole that the cattle might drink, he therefore wished not to go into the house. Mrs Weston saw him dabbing his face, however, which bled considerably, and asked him why he refused to have it attended to. "Oh, thank you," said he, smiling, "I am to be a surgeon, and I must not mind such a scratch as this."—"I admire your courage," said she, and looked round to see if George heard the youth; "but I, without being a surgeon, know that this frosty air will do it no good; and that that pretty cotton handkerchief will do it harm: so now let me see if you are as tractable as you are courageous, or I will never employ you to attend my family when you commence to practise!" added she, smiling kindly. Frederick could not withstand such pleasant manners, and they went in together, followed by George and Alfred. Mrs Weston and Jarvis made every thing comfortable for the young people, and soon after Mr Weston and Mr

Merton joined them; they had, with James Dobson's assistance, got the horse on his feet, and found that he had sustained no injury; so he was led into the stable, and James offered to try his skill in mending the trace that was snapped. Mr Merton *said* but little on the subject of the accident; but as he looked at his children and found them so slightly hurt, his eyes filled with tears, and turning to the window, mentally (that is, in his mind) thanked the Almighty that they had escaped from so dangerous a situation with so little injury. He then insisted on going to Stubbs's cottage to see his leg, before he would have his own shoulder attended to; and returning in a short time, Sam Styles the cow-boy was dispatched with a note to Mrs Merton, stating the extent of the accident; ordering plasters and lotions; and informing her that at Mr and Mrs Weston's particular request, Clara and Frederick were to remain at the farm for a few days. Clara's uncle was but little injured; Ellen told her she was glad of that, or she would be obliged to sit still while all the others danced, as they were to have a little ball on the 26th; "And this is the 22nd," added she, "so if you keep very quiet, you will be quite well by that time." Clara thanked her, and very quickly they were friends.

Who that has reached his or her thirtieth year, does not look back with regret upon the happy hours of childhood, when intimacies and friendships are formed without the restrictions of ceremony and etiquette!

A plaster was applied to Fred's cheek, and he in turn became assistant to his father, and rubbed his shoulder

with an embrocation, by the fire that was blazing in a bedroom, which had been prepared for the London guests. Old Stubbs was again visited, not only by Mr Merton, but by Jarvis, with a large basket full of meat, bread, and other things that Mrs Weston thought would be acceptable; and by this time dinner was ready at the farm. The good host and hostess left their London manners at Blackheath; wisely adopting the plain, farming, hospitable, unfashionable method of entertainment, in preference to keeping up the more elegant and refined style which they had always been accustomed to, but which would have suited ill with their present situation; besides, that it would make the plain country people who were with them, uncomfortable. A few hours were thus passed by Mr Merton with real pleasure; and as the winter sun was setting, he arose with reluctance to leave the kind inhabitants of the farm. The sofa, with Clara "reclined like a sultana," as Ellen said, was now drawn towards the fire; and with the exception of Mrs W. (who still found that some of her domestic arrangements were unfinished) they were all again as social as possible. "Did I not see some boughs of yew, when Mr Weston was so kind as to bring me in?" asked Clara of her new friend. "Yes," replied she; "why do you ask?"—"Because I thought you were going to decorate the room with it, and I was glad of it. I love to see a house with all kinds of evergreens about it at Christmas; I finished our's, with Fred.'s assistance, yesterday."—"Indeed!" replied Ellen; "Oh dear, no! we were not going to do any thing half so pretty;

papa told Roger to saw off that branch that he might make a yew bow for my brothers; I dare say they will fancy themselves as valiant as the Ancient Britons were, when they have it," added she, looking across at them, as they listened to the conversation between the two girls. "Does every person in this part of the country adorn their houses in the way you describe?" —"No," replied Clara; "a few *leetle* bits of holly are always stuck about; but I know one lady who is partial to the custom, and I have followed her example." —"Oh you must tell us all about it; and though you cannot move yourself, I'll do all I can by your instructions; and——" "Oh, and we three will get the boughs," said George;" are we only to have *yew?*"— "Oh yes, and YOU too!" said Fred.; who rather thought himself witty, and considered himself almost a surgeon already. They smiled at his pun, and Clara replied, "Oh every thing that is green I like; I am almost scolded sometimes for cutting the bushes of lauristinus, and alerternus, and ilex, and arbor vitæ, and large leaved box, and laurel, and Cæsar's laurel, and arbutus, and Daphnæ lauriola, and Chinese privet, and Portugal laurel, and occuba—no not occuba; the yellow spots on its leaves—it is variegated, you know —make it look so sickly."—"Indeed I do *not* know, my dear Clara, any thing about it, or hardly any of the names even of the trees you have mentioned! How clever you must be to know so much about these things!" and the little admiring unenvious girl, drew closer to her new friend, and held the hand that hung over the side of the sofa. Clara blushed at Ellen's

unexpected praise, and hastened to say, "Oh you praise me for more knowledge than I possess; I learned all these names from Mrs Rogers, the lady whom I have mentioned. I was always fond of plants, and this kind friend lent me two or three beautiful books, which instructed me in the names and the management of my little favourites; the books are 'Flora Domestica, or the domestic Flower Garden;' and 'Sylvan Sketches.' There is a great deal of poetry in them, which Mrs Rogers says she does not expect I shall either like or understand yet, but in a year or two I think I shall; I shall be very glad to lend them to you, Miss Weston." —"Oh don't call me any thing but Ellen, pray Miss Merton, or I shall think you are offended with my freedom in calling you Clara!"—"Well then, dear Ellen, I think you would like my beautiful books; and I am to have 'Gilpin's Forest Scenery' soon. Oh, you cannot think how fond I am of trees and shrubs!"— "Ellen," said Alfred, "what do you think? Frederick says he is almost sure we have all the trees with those hard names, that Clara and you have been talking about, for grandpapa was very fond of a garden; you remember Hannah told us so, the first morning after we came here; well, and so he asked Mr Merton for cuttings, and so, to-morrow, if papa and mamma have no objection, we will all go and cut you lots of every thing; and I say, George," added he, turning to his brother; "we'll climb the old oak in the Ridge Field, and cut down and bring in a cart load of ivy!"—Mr W. gave consent, and that evening closed in bright

hopes for the morrow. Clara shared Ellen's room, and as there were two beds in her brothers' apartment, Frederick was easily accommodated. — As soon as breakfast was over, the grand lopping began; and Ellen was almost frightened when she saw the immense quantities they had collected.

Clara was very ingenious; and as Mrs Weston had no flower vases as chimney ornaments, she constructed covers for some handsome old china sugar basins, &c. out of pasteboard, which she pierced full of holes, and made to fit in tightly. These were for the chimney-piece in the drawing-room; and Ellen sat by in wondering delight at Clara's nimble fingers. "Now, dear Ellen, (there, I have not called you Miss Weston once to-day!)—now get some little sprigs of ilex, that is dark, so it will do best for the backs of the vases;—only two bits—that's right. Oh, how lovely they are, with their glossy rose-shaped leaves, and pale green veins!"—"They are indeed! I dare say, if it had not been for that fortunate overturn, I should never have known you, dear Clara, and never have had sense and taste to admire the different shrubs that grow at this dull time of the year!"—"Oh yes you would; I, perhaps, should not, if it had not been for kind Mrs Rogers: how I wish you knew her!—then you are younger than I am, you know; but if you have taste enough to admire such a scene as that which you told me of last night in bed—I mean the rising sun, on the day when your poor grandmamma died, I am sure that a love of the other beautiful things must follow.

But come; now two or three of those bright green large-leafed box sprigs, their pale and formal way of growing will be a contrast to the pretty ilex; now two of the fan-like arbor vitæ; how gracefully they spread over! in the outside holes we will have little taper sprays of yew; and now a beautiful bunch of cheerful lauristinus for the middle; aye, that looks very nicely, now: if we had but a few snow-drops to hang their drooping heads among this green bunch of foliage; but they will not peep above ground for a month. Till this sharp frost came and nipped them, I had primroses, hepaticas, and two or three more flowers, in my garden."—"Oh, I know," said Ellen, jumping up, and scattering the bits of evergreen from her lap in all directions; out she flew, and in five minutes returned with enough artificial flowers to set up a country milliner. "Look, look, dear Clara, what mamma has given me! as we are in mourning, she does not want them; so we can put the tiny flowers in these vases, and the larger ones among the boughs in the vase on the top of the piano."—"Well, Ellen, I never should have thought of any thing so pretty! Oh how beautifully you have arranged them. I think Mrs Weston will like these decorations very much, don't you?"—"Goodness, yes, I'm sure she will; she knows nothing of it yet." The little happy girl soon completed her tasteful employment, in which Clara begged to assist; but she was kept a prisoner in her chair, on account of her sprained ancle. A great clattering of shoes, as if a dozen persons were coming up stairs, announced the three noisy boys, who burst

into the room to fetch Ellen away into the barn, that she might admire their morning's work.

"Oh how beautiful!" exclaimed their voices all at once; "now come, come, and see what we have done." Away they all rushed, bounding through the straw in the yard, and in at the huge doors, where Ellen stood in astonishment. They had moved all the hay from the middle of the spacious barn into the two further parts; had tied and nailed up to the beams, rafters, sides, and posts, large branches of ivy and holly, and had, in fact, converted the sober, ugly old building, into a beautiful bower for their ball-room. Hannah's broom had been borrowed, and the floor was a miracle of cleanliness. Clay candlesticks were fixed on pieces of board in various parts, and Fred. observed, that "the lights among the green leaves would look beautiful!"—"And so they will, indeed," exclaimed Ellen. "Oh how I long for the 26th. We will not tell papa and mamma a word about it: how surprised they will be;—but I must run back to poor Clara: Oh I hope she will be able to dance with us. Good bye, good bye, you are very dear, good, clever, industrious boys; and away the sprightly creature ran back to her friend. In the evening the expected guests came, and a pleasant meeting it was to all parties. Arthur and Eliza Ford were not so amiable as the young persons already at the farm; they were both proud, and not inclined to associate with the Mertons, whom they considered as country louts, who could know nothing of 'life' or politeness. Many, who are older than these young persons, shew their own want

of gentility while they are endeavouring to prove that of others. True politeness may be, and often is found in the most uneducated persons; and too frequently we find well-dressed vulgarity and rudeness in a splendid ball room.

The 26th at last arrived; and strange to say that although so long and much anticipated, no disappointment occurred. Mr and Mrs Merton increased the number and the pleasure of the dinner party; and Clara had her father's permission to use her ancle in the little dance. After tea, all the younger part of the happy circle, glided out of the room, and away they went, accompanied by Jarvis, and Betty, and Hannah, and James Dobson, and Roger, and Sam, with three or four of their friends, and Tim Winkey, the blind fiddler; all carrying chairs, tables, candles, and refreshments to their ball room. By Jarvis's advice, each candle was placed in a large tumbler, and set on the brackets: "for fear the sparks should fall, and cause mischief;" that was done; then that bustling and very useful person arranged the chairs, and set the tables out of the way of the dancers; and, at last, the room was pronounced to be ready. All the young ones then tore after one another, over the straw, to bring the company from the drawing room. No one there had any idea of the secret in the barn, and the papas and mammas could not imagine the cause of the eagerness and delight that shone in each young sparkling eye, as the children requested they would "indulge a young party with their company to a dance." Not one

of the invited guests liked the idea of leaving the warm, pleasant room, particularly when they found their visit was to be made in the barn!—but they kindly gave up their own comfort to their children's gratification; so, shawls and cloaks were brought, and they soon found themselves in the tasteful ball room. As many, if not more expressions of admiration were bestowed on the ingenuity and pretty arrangements that the boys had made, than had been already lavished on the girls' elegant fancies in the drawing-room. Dancing then commenced, Mrs Weston and Mr Ford, Mr W. and Mrs Merton, Mr M. and Mrs Ford, Ellen and Arthur, Clara and George, quickly paired off, for a country dance; Frederick went up to Eliza, and was going to ask her to become his partner, but her pride was roused at the hateful thought of dancing with a "Wiltshire boor," so, seeing him coming, she turned quickly round, to ask the little, gentle Alfred to dance with her, rather than accept Fred.; but the child had run across to speak to Ellen; so the silly Eliza, seeing no escape, pretended to have hurt her foot, and said she could not dance! Fred. saw her angry look, and guessed that she had told a falsehood, to avoid dancing with him; he therefore expressed but little sorrow for that which he saw was a pretence, and went to seek Alfred, with whom he joined the set; and a merry frolic they had. Miss Ford bitterly repented, before the dance was half over, that her pride had prevented her from sharing the amusement; particularly as she was considered a very good dancer, at school; and moreover, to her great surprise, she saw that Frederick was by far the most genteel in

his manner of dancing, of all the young people! Having told a falsehood, however, she was obliged to persist in it: the lesson was a useful one, and she profited by it. Blind-man's-buff was proposed, in less than an hour, because the servants had yet to enjoy themselves; so a tremendous game was soon begun, in which Miss Eliza was persuaded to join; as it would not hurt her foot, Mrs Merton told her, so much as the strain of dancing. The noise in that old barn, on that merry night, might have been heard half a mile! The party, in another half hour, returned to the house, where forfeits, cards, and other amusements, closed the evening: while those who were left in the ball room rivalled their betters in noise, mirth, and hilarity. The next night, our young group assembled there again; having resolved to enact a play, which they called "the Magic Ring." Mrs Ford had brought down the beautiful romance of that name; and the young people, having read it aloud to one another, were so delighted with it, that they proposed to make a drama of it. Frederick, being the tallest lad, was to be "Sir Otto;" and as the real knight wore silver armour, so he cased himself in the nearest approach to silver that he could meet with; which was a sheet of tin, that had been bought to line the meat screen with! this was his "corslet," he said; a bright tin saucepan, without a handle, graced his head, in which he stuck a bunch of peacock's feathers; a piece of old iron hoop served for the knight's gleaming sword; and Betty's *pet* tin saucepan lid, he flourished as his shield! Arthur was complimented with the offer of being the noble and gorgeous "Sir Folko de Montfau-

con; his blue and gold attire was really magnificent! The ingenious Clara manufactured a blue calico lining of a window curtain into a corslet; Mrs Ford's amber-coloured shawl flowed in graceful folds from his shoulders; and another idol of Betty's—a brass stewpan and cover, served for his golden helmet and shield; while his sword came from the same armoury (that is, the wood-house) where the old iron hoop had been happily discovered, and brought to light. George enacted "Old Sir Hugh," the quiet of whose character did not suit him, notwithstanding he was assisted so ably by a green velvet reticule of his mother's, which he wore as the well-known "cap" of the staunch veteran; besides having a tankard of cyder ever near him, by way of "Johanisberg." "Sir Heerdegen," in his rusty armour, was easily accommodated, from the discarded favourites of Betty's store; and little Alfred fought manfully under this mean guise. Eliza flourished in Sir Folko's favourite colors, blue and gold, as the capricious "Gabrielle;" her pelisse turned wrong side outwards (it was lined with blue silk) and Mrs Weston's French cloak ditto (which was amber coloured) enabled her to perform to the life; particularly as she wore on her finger a very beautiful and valuable ring of her mother's, as the "magic ring." Clara, in a white frock, and with white roses in her hair, represented the gentle "Blanchefleur" admirably; so that the sober, saint-like maiden, "Bertha," fell to the lot of the sprightly Ellen. However, 'good fun' they had: the valiant onslaughts of the knights, as they battered and rattled their swords and

armour, in their fierce encounters, were so fearful, " it may hardly be told;" indeed so terrible was the sound afar off, even unto the kitchen, that Betty, like another " Gerda," came among them; her alarm was for her dear bright saucepans, which she judged (and justly) would bear the dints and marks of the knights' prowess for ever! Indeed all " Gerda's" conjurations were of no avail; and nothing short of the 'mild eyes of the Lady Minatrost,' (Mrs Weston) could appease their wrath. She too heard the din of the battle, and came to calm the combatants; she laughed, however, so exceedingly, as she caught a glimpse of the engagement, that, without discovering herself, she hastened back, and brought her husband and their guests to enjoy the extraordinary scene with her; and again the barn, (which now represented a glade in an old forest of Germany,) became a scene of fun for all the inmates of the farm.

Pleasure, alas! will have an end; so our merry knights and ladies were obliged to leave their happy game; the recollection of it, however, was, for a length of time, nearly as great an enjoyment as the fun itself had been. They promised themselves many more evenings of mirth and social pleasure, which, unfortunately, were not realized, for on the very next day a letter arrived from Mr Ford's partner, respecting business, which compelled him to leave his kind friends; his wife and daughter were obliged to accompany him, as Mrs F. did not like travelling without him; so with real regret the young people parted. Eliza and Arthur had seen the folly of pride, and certainly returned

to London less inclined to feel contempt for others than they were when they left it. It had been arranged that the Westons were to visit Mr and Mrs Merton on New Year's day, and that the three children were to remain at Stapleford for a week. They found the time pass almost as pleasantly at Mr M.'s as it had in the Christmas week; though certainly there was less noïse, it must be allowed, at Stapleford, than there had been at the farm. Ellen read the delightful books which Clara had so eulogized (that is, praised), and very soon became as fond of the study of plants, shrubs, and trees, as her young friend was. They promised themselves many happy and pleasant walks together, as the spring advanced, and regretted that in a very few months they would be separated, by the return of the Weston family to London.

The boys learnt of Frederick the different ways of making artificial flies for fishing; he had 'Walton's Complete Angler,' and was as fond of the cruel sport as that otherwise gentle and kind-hearted old man was. Fred. always called him his '*Kingfisher*,' meaning that he was the king of fishers.

This love of punning and saying smart, or what he thought, smart things, was an unfortunate habit for the youth; it gave him a pert and forward appearance which is very unpleasant in young people. He had many good qualities, however; he was studious, and was fond of chemistry; he shewed his young visitors many interesting and beautiful experiments; one in particular delighted them, it was called 'red fire,' and was made with nitrate of strotites, charcoal, sul-

phur, and other ingredients; and when set alight, it threw a crimson glare over every thing in the room. George said he was almost sure it was used, when they last went to the play, where a summer house was burnt." —"Oh, aye to be sure!" said Ellen; "Thérèse, or the Orphan of Geneva," it was called: oh, how frightened I was for that dear sweet Miss Kelly! I quite love her! I am always so glad when I go to the theatre, if she is going to perform; I would rather see her than any other actress in the world! How glad I should be to have you both go with us to a play, Clara and Frederick," said Ellen. "Aye, we never saw one," replied they! When a great store of pity had been bestowed on these unfortunate young people who had never seen a play! Fred. asked if they were fond of fireworks. "Oh yes, that is—I'm sure we should be, for we never saw any thing but a squib, and that's very pretty," replied Ellen. —"Papa and mamma," said George, "promised to take us to Vauxhall last summer; but one night Ellen was poorly, and another time it rained, and another evening was fixed, but papa was detained in town, and then we came down here; and so we have been disappointed."—"Oh, I make a great many fireworks," said Fred.; and we often have quite a grand display, don't we Clara? Well, to-night will be a famous time for letting some off, it is so dark and calm; so I will ask my father if I may have my treat this evening instead of next week. I made—how many, do you think, of different sorts? seventeen!—four rockets, six Roman candles, two gerbs, two Bengal lights, and three Chinese trees!"—"My goodness!" "O my!" &c. fol-

lowed this magnificent catalogue of *pyrotechnic* skill (that is, the art of making fireworks). Mr Weston gave consent, and arrangements were quickly made for the display. A signal rocket went up in fine style; and the shouts of delight that followed its majestic rush into the dark arch above them, gratified Fred. exceedingly. His exhibition was no new thing to any one near Stapleford; he had made and discharged so many sets, that the sight was no longer wonderful to his neighbours; they had become fastidious (that is, difficult to please) and could tell when any piece was a 'bad un,' and so forth: but now he had spectators prepared to admire every thing, who could detect no little faults, and make no odious comparisons; his delight was equal to their own. The lively battery between the rival 'Roman candles,' like two engaging armies, throwing their hot shot on to each other, pleased them much; then the sullen determined roar of the Chinese trees, while throwing out their thousands of brilliant stars, delighted them; then again the quiet soft gleaming of the Bengal light quite enchanted the little party! "Oh," said Ellen, "now I can fancy how the Lady Minatrost's castle appeared in our dear 'Magic Ring!' that soft moonlight, you know, Clara, that was ever round her, must have looked like this!" —"Aye, and don't you remember the account of the first fight by torch light," said George. "Now, look, while the Chinese tree is going off, how black the trees, and clouds, and every thing appear to be, just as it is mentioned there!" Here Fred. came to the window where they were all viewing and admiring his skill,

with a pin wheel which he found among his store; and which, like a true knight, he presented courteously to Ellen, assuring her that she might let it off in perfect safety; for that if the sparks were to fall on her hand, or on her muslin dress even, they would not burn: so she took the stick, with the pin wheel on a large pin at the end of it, and Fred. lighted it, giving it a spin at the same time, which the force of the fire kept in a constant twirl.

After the exhibition was over, they could talk of nothing else, so astonishing did it appear that a youth who was so little older than they were, should be able to make such beautiful and wonderful things. "I do not wonder," said Alfred, who had sat still, thinking, for some time past, "I do not wonder that such strange tales of magic have been told and believed! now only think, Ellen, if very clever men, many hundred years ago, when hardly any body could read, had known, and perhaps they *did* know, the way to make that red fire; what horrid things they might have done with it; and how frightened the poor people would have been! for you saw, I dare say, that it did not only make the things all about the room look red, but the *air was a blood color, and yet clear! as if we were breathing fire without flame or smoke!* I never saw anything so very astonishing in my life! I wish papa had seen it! will you be so kind as to shew the experiment to him, when he comes to fetch us home to-morrow, Frederick?"—"Oh certainly," said Fred.—"I wish," continued Alfred, that Mr Merton would come into the room, for I should like to ask him about

this curious stuff, this *stroutites*, I think you call it." —"Oh I can tell you every thing respecting it," observed Frederick, a little proudly, "it is a mineral production, and was first discovered by Dr. Hope, in the year 1791, in the lead mine of Stroutian, in Argyleshire; It is found also (combined with sulphuric acid) in great quantities near Bristol; and is there used for mending the roads. It is sometimes called *stroutian*. A simple way of making the red fire is to mix a spoonful of spirit of wine, with a little powdered stroutian, and to set it on fire, and it will burn with a bright red flame."—They all thanked him for his information, and continued talking of this wonderful mineral. "I think I should like to know chemistry very much!" at length observed Alfred, gravely:—"Should you? then I am sure you shall be welcome to all my books; I think you will find Park's Rudiments of Chemistry the best to begin with," replied Frederick. "This is the last pleasant evening!" said Clara, with a sigh, "and we did not finish reading that pretty account of the martins, in 'White's Natural History of Selborne,' this morning;"—"well, you must take the book home, as you are so fond of it, Ellen, and finish it. Come, how shall we pass our last social night?"—"Oh we'll have some riddles, if you are fond of them, Ellen," said Frederick. "Aye, let us have some of your own, Fred." replied his sister. "Well then," said he, "what addition does Adam require to make him a lady?"—George said "a petticoat;" Alfred could think of nothing that would do, and Ellen "gave it up."—"An M," said Fred. "Madam!"—"Dear me! did you make

that out, yourself?" said Ellen. "Yes, now for another; What addition does Adam require, to make him a woman?"—"Law! why the same letter I suppose!"—"No, Alfred, an E, Adame! Now another; what addition does Adam require to make him a curse?"—"Gracious! a curse! Oh I don't think we ought to guess that; I'm afraid its wicked!" said Ellen, rather alarmed. "Pugh! what a squeamish thing you are!" said George, roughly; "You should hear the boys at our school swear, and then you would not make such a fuss about this trifle."—"No, George, I should *not* hear the boys swear! and if I did, I hope it would not make me think it less wicked than I do now; and you need not say 'our' school, for thank goodness, you are not going to it again!"—"Well, now don't quarrel, there's a good fellow!" said Fred. to George, and we will go on to another riddle."—"No, not till I know what the last is," said he; "I have found it out!"—"An *n*," said Alfred; "Adam-*n*!"—"Well, now, what additional letter to laughter, will convert it into bloodshed?" Ellen was lucky enough to guess the letter *s*, —'*slaughter*.' Then he asked, "Why are the Greeks like an infant?" that was given up; "Because *they are in arms*." Clara reminded him of the *lily*. "Aye, why is a lily which is said to be an emblem of innocence, a constant contradiction to the assertion?" That was Clara's favourite, and she could not help whispering to Ellen, "Because it is a repeated *lie—Ly, Ly!*"—"I wish *I* could guess one!" said George a little pettishly.—"Oh, so you will soon, I dare say; here is an easy one: Why are the stars like stale fish?" George

tried, and tried, and at last guessed it.—"Because they shine in the dark."—"Very well," said Fred. good-naturedly.—"Now I suppose you are tired of them."—"Oh dear, no!" they all exclaimed.—"Well, can you tell what letter added to *a lady*, will convert it into sickness?" This was new to Clara, but she was a capital guesser, and found out his riddles almost as soon as he asked her; and she said in half a minute, "An *M*,—*malady!*"—"Why is a person crying out in pretended pain, like an eastern tobacco-pipe?" continued Fred.—"Oh, *that* I'm sure we shall never find out!" said George.—"Then I'll tell you," replied he; "because it is a *mere sham* (MEER SHAUM)".—"And here's my last, just in time to *last* while Rachael lays the cloth for supper: Why did not Cain kill Adam?" "Because he couldn't—because he didn't wish—because he was too strong for him;" and twenty other reasons were given, but no one guessed.—"Because he was not *able!* (ABEL)"—"Oh, this is the best!" said Ellen. "And did you really, Frederick, make these all yourself?"—"Oh dear, yes, that I did," replied he; "and——" he was going to add, "and several others that you would not understand;" but his politeness got the better of his vanity, so he said no more.

On the following day the young Westons left their kind friends at Stapleford, and returned to the farm. Before she went from home, Ellen had one day asked her mother to be so kind as write her some poetry about Winter. Mrs Weston said that she did not think Ellen old enough to understand and enjoy good poetry; and if she wanted mere rhymes, it would be a

pity to spoil her taste by reading any thing inferior. "Yes," said the eager little girl, "but you know, mamma, we must have a beginning in every thing we learn; and if you write me something pretty, and easy to be understood, it would teach me to like grander, harder poetry, such as Shakespeare's, you know, mamma, that you are so fond of. I *quite* understand *him* though!" Her mother could not help laughing at this confession of a knowledge so superior to her own, and begged to know when she had studied him? —"Ah, mamma, now you are joking! I only mean that I like some of those pretty little bits, such as

'He saw books in the running brooks,
'Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.'

and that sweet bit about the daffodil, 'that comes before the swallow dares,'—that is, dares to come over because of the cold, I suppose," added she, 'and takes the winds of March with beauty.' And that about the winds blowing over a bank of violets, 'stealing and giving odour.'"—"Really, my dear little girl, I did not know you had such a taste for good poetry. Why should you wish to read any thing that I can write, after hearing such as this?"—"No; but mamma, if I not always hear Mozart's music, should I treat the 'Muleteer's Song,' or 'La Biondin, in gondoletta,' with contempt?"—"Well, well, saucebox," said her mother, smiling, "I will write you a few stanzas, if you really wish me; but mind, I shall suit them entirely to your years."—"Oh thank you, dear, kind mamma, any thing you like." On her return to Smallridge, therefore, she found that her mother had written the following little poem:—

ON WINTER.

1.

'Tis winter! see the lowering clouds,
In sullen grandeur drag along their load:
The wind is up, and drives, in crowds,
The cumb'rous masses on their gloomy road.
Hark! how the north wind roars and raves;
And the poor, naked tree its fury braves!

2.

See how the snow begins to fall,
How in wide sheets it drifts along the sky:
Hark! how the birds their comrades call;
Aud each seeks shelter, with a timid cry:
No downy, leafy, cheerful summer nest
Invites the flurried tremblers to their rest!

3.

See too the patient, lowing cow;
How instinct teaches her to bear the gale;
Look! from the wind her head she'll bow;
Aud thus her hardier side the storms assail.
The rooks, in vain, now seek their daily meal;
The worms have crawl'd too low, no cold they feel.

4.

How lazily the morning sun
Creeps o'er the brow of yonder lovely hill!
His feeble beams have scarce begun
To melt the ice-drops from the window sill.
A glowing radiance gilds the dazzling white
That spread o'er all the landscape in the night.

5.

Delightful wonder! glitt'ring, soft,
Light, fragile, delicate, serene, and pure!
In happy childhood have I oft
Made numerous balls, of a supply secure,
And, spite of aching fingers, have enjoy'd
The merry frolic, I would *now* avoid.

6.

How silently the coaches run
Upon the new white pavement on the road;
Their clogg'd wheels glitter in the sun;
And the poor horses feel the added load.
How gentle some of nature's voices sound!
These "*books*, the running brooks," *in ice are bound;*

7.

And tell no babbling, joyful tale,
To waving sedges, as they bustle by;
But, dark and still, they scarcely veil
The quiet, wond'ring weeds, that under, lie.
The happy insects suffer no alloy
To summer frolicking, and sunny joy;

8.

Their winter in unconscious sleep,
Perhaps in pleasing dreams, is dozed away,
Till spring's warm beams; then out they'll creep,
Glad to escape from torpor, glad to play;
And in new dresses, painted, gauze, or burnish'd,
They'll spring at once to life, for pleasure furnished.

9.

The gentle voice among the trees,
That whisper'd to the leaves, the summer long,
Died when *they* died! The winter breeze
Alone lives now, cruel, and fierce, and strong,—
Like a fell tyrant, who his pow'r abuses,
It tortures all its victims as it chooses.

Ellen was pleased with her poetry, and all went on smoothly and pleasantly for some weeks. The children often saw the young Mertons, and their time in consequence passed delightfully.

One day Mrs Weston was seated alone, at work, Ellen and George were busy with their gardens; and she supposed Alfred was with them; but he just then came into the room, and drawing out his favourite little foot-stool, sat down by his mother, and looked gravely and thoughtfully into the fire; he had taken up a book, as if to read, but when Mrs W. looked gently round, she saw that the volume of "Winter Evenings" was the wrong way upwards on his lap. His mother silently watched him; presently he sighed deeply; then arose, and came close to her elbow; took up her scissars, cut a yard or two of cotton off the reel, into little bits;

then sighed again, still appearing to be lost in thought; his mother continued to observe him; at last he said, laying down the scissars, "Mamma!"—"Yes, my love!" he paused, then began all in a hurry; "mamma, I am afraid you will think me very foolish, but I must tell you;—do you know it is quite true that there are such things as witches!"—"Indeed! then I hope they live somewhere near us, for I shall make a point of calling on them; I, unfortunately, left my card case at Blackheath, or I could make a morning visit and leave my card, said Mrs W., smiling. "*Witches*, mamma, I said *witches!*" exclaimed Alfred, somewhat alarmed at his mother's odd manner; you would not call on, or visit a *dreadful witch*, would you?"—"Most certainly, my dear, and if you particularly wished, you should go with me! but I see you are not in a joking humour, so tell me what reason you have for asserting that there are such beings?"—"Because, mamma, there is one lives about three miles from us, and she has been seen, yes (turning very pale) really seen only yesterday!!"—"Bless me! where does she come from? how long has she lived *there?* where *is* the place of her abode? and who has seen her?"—"Oh, no one knows where she comes from; she was not there a month ago; the name of the lane is '*Dead-man's-hollow!*' and Sam Style saw her picking up sticks, and heard her, last evening, muttering to herself so dreadfully, that he ran all the way home, without stopping!"—"And when did Sam tell you this, Alfred?"—"About an hour ago, mamma; George wanted a rake, and told me to go and ask Sam for it; so I went, and he was using it to clear the yard

from the remains of the straw, and he asked me if I could wait just while he finished, and then he told me; and he said too, that Sally Stubbs told him, this morning, that farmer Wayland had lost three pigs and a calf, in the strangest way that can be."—"How do you mean lost—stolen?"—"Oh no, mamma, they have died or been killed!"—"Well, my dear boy, said Mrs Weston, I still doubt the truth of the story, and"—— "Why, mamma, I thought you said (oh, no, it was papa who said) that if he could see one, he would believe in witches!"—"Well, and I say too, that *I* will believe in them, whenever I shall be so fortunate as to see one: now I would advise you, for your own sake, to think no more about the silly tales you have heard. Go to your brother and sister, and help them; but first run and tell your father that I hope he will not forget to sow the raddishes which he talked of to-day, at breakfast." Alfred would have preferred to stay, and converse on the terrible subject; but he attended immediately to his mother's commands, so he reluctantly left the room. As soon as he was gone, Mrs W. put on her bonnet and shawl, and, leaving word with Jarvis that she was going out for a walk, she took the road to Stapleford, hoping she should meet Mr Merton, who she knew was in the daily practice of attending a family near the farm. Fortunately, as she turned out of Smallridge lane, she saw him walking his horse leisurely along. "Good morning! Do you know I am come out on purpose to meet you!" said Mrs W. smiling.—"Indeed! you do me honour," replied Mr M. smiling also, bowing, and dismounting to walk by her side. "The truth is,"

said she, I want to ask you a question or two, which I could have had answered by the men at home, but I do not wish the children to know that I have made any enquiries; I therefore apply to you, because you will keep my secret." Mr Merton looked all attention, and she continued. "Can you tell me where 'Dead Man's Hollow' is, how far it is from the farm, and which way I can go to it?"—"Dead Man's Hollow! Mercy what a tasteful walk you have chosen! You will not like it, I assure you; it is a very damp, marshy, dark, close, narrow lane, overgrown with underwood, thickly covering the steep banks, and in fact almost choking it up: it formerly led from farmer Wayland's farm to some fields which used to belong to him, but which he now lets; so it is never used. There is an idle report too, that a murder was committed there a very long time ago, which accounts for the name, and for the dislike of the common people to go near it."—"Thank you for the description: now how am I to reach it, and how far is it? You see you have not frightened me from my intended walk!"—"This fine March weather has fortunately hardened the clay soil, or you really would not be able to go," replied Mr Merton: "it is three miles from the farm, and you must go on down the lane, past Stubbs's cottage; then through the coppice wood, then cross many low, damp meadows, keeping Farmer Wayland's to your right; then you will see the White Horse on the Downs, quite in front of you; then a remarkably large old oak at the end of a field, will attract your notice, and by that oak is a gate which leads into this neglected deep

lane."—"Thank you again; I shall not fail to find it; your directions have been so accurate, and it is but just," added she, laughing, "that you should be rewarded, by knowing the reason for this extraordinary walking passion of mine! I am going to pay a visit in that lane! Aye, you look astonished, but it is true; and in a day or two I hope to introduce the person who lives there to your notice. I find I have raised your curiosity, and I quite rejoice to see that the whole of that failing (that is, curiosity) is not confined to our sex. I always thought the gentlemen had as much as we have, and now I find I was right."—Mr Merton laughed also; said she had quite roused his curiosity, and that he should be impatient till he heard all about this mysterious walk and visit. "That I promise, you shall know to-morrow evening. Give my love to Mrs M., Clara, and Frederick, and tell them I hope they will come with you to tea, that they too may be informed of the whole affair. We shall expect you. Farewell!" and she turned towards home. "Thank you; we will not fail to be with you. Good morning!" and they separated.

When Mrs Weston returned, dinner was ready. While they sat at table, she said, "I have been out for a little stroll, and it is so dry and pleasant, that I think we should all enjoy a long walk this afternoon. What say you, my love?"—"A very delightful thought of yours, Marian! I shall like it exceedingly."—"Oh dear, yes, so shall I," said Ellen: "and I, and I," added the two boys. "Where shall we go?" asked Mr W.—"I think towards the Westbury White Horse,

on the Downs, if you like, that we may take a nearer view of it"—"So we will; it is an interesting relic of antiquity, and I wonder the inhabitants of that town do not take more care of it."—"Dear me, papa, a relic!" said Ellen, "oh be so kind as tell us all about it; I have seen it sometimes through the trees, and have wondered why it was made; and yet I never thought to ask you."

When Hannah had cleared the room, they turned to the fire, and Mr Weston said, "When Alfred the Great was king, you all know that England was invaded by the fierce Danes, don't you?"—"Oh yes, papa, and all about the burning the old woman's cakes, in the island of Athelney, and—" "Very well; then you know that many battles were fought between the Britons and the Danes."—"Yes, papa."—"One of those battles, in which Alfred was victorious, took place in or near the village of Edington, about seven miles from hence, just under the hill, on which there is a Danish encampment, called Bratton Castle. Well, to commemorate that victory, Alfred, it is said, ordered the figure of a horse to be cut in the chalk, which was done by removing the turf surface, and leaving the white chalk bare. The horse is about a hundred feet high,* and being on the outer side of the Downs, is a conspicuous object and land-mark for 50 or 60 miles. I have read, I think, in the "Beauties of England," that formerly it was an annual custom at Westbury for the inhabitants of the town and neighbouring vil-

* Britton's Wiltshire.

lages to assemble and clear the grass and weeds from the surface of the horse, after which they used to hold a 'revel' or 'fair' on the hill, and enjoy themselves for the remainder of the day: at all events, it is a pity that there should not exist so pleasant a custom, for it is a pity to see an ancient memorial of one of the greatest kings going to decay."—"I forgot to tell you, George," said Ellen, "that there is a figure of a white horse cut on a chalk Down near Weymouth, and mamma told me that it was made in honour of King George the Third, by the soldiers of a regiment that was stationed there."—"There are three other white horses among these wide Downs," resumed Mr Weston, "all old, and supposed to have been made in commemoration of Alfred's victories, as a *White Horse* was one of his principal banners:—but we had better prepare for our walk; we can talk as well in the open air as here." They were soon ready, and away they went. As they strolled through the copse wood, they found flowers and other beautiful curiosities that they had never seen before. The tasteful, star-like wood anemone, with its lovely foliage, threw Ellen into a fit of ecstacy, which was not diminished by her coming suddenly on a tuft of primroses, in a little mossy nook under the twisted roots of an old beech. Two or three species of early orchis, violets out of number, bluebells, and other lovely 'children of the earth,' just waked into existence, and waving their gentle heads in the genial air, seemed to nod to the happy group as they passed, as if to welcome those who could love their placid beauty.

Soon the wood, with its world of leaves and flowers, was exchanged for the low, flat pasture lands of farmer Wayland, and beauties of a different kind were found. Cows too were quietly grazing, or ruminating among the crisp verdure that surrounded them; and a busy brook, hurrying through the meadows, seemed to babble of the past winter's storms to the party that stood on its sedgy banks. A quantity of red sediment, that lay quietly in the shallows, attracted the notice of Alfred, and he asked what it could be. His mother told him it was the the larvæ of gnats, which are born in water, and are hatched by the warmth of the sun. "Oh dear, then that is the reason, I suppose," said Ellen, "that we always, of a warm evening, see such clouds of gnats hovering over ponds and ditches. How pretty it is to see them borne away on a little puff of wind, as if it was at play with them; and then to see them come floating down again! and how I love, in a warm summer's night, to be awaked with the tiny piping of a gnat close to my ear—only I am always stung so!—what a loud noise it is for such a *leetle* creature to make! I always think of fairies when I hear it; for I remember once mamma read something out of Shakes—— yes, I know it was Shakespeare's plays, about stealing the honey-bags from the bees; and that tapers were to be made out of the wax on their thighs, and they were to be lighted at the glow-worm's eyes; and I wanted something to be said about the piping of the gnat, but I suppose Shakespeare did not think of it:" and thus she continued chatting, and amusing herself and brothers till

they reached the field in which the old oak stood. The three children were on at some distance before their parents, and sat resting on the gate leading into the lane; when they saw two boys in the next field looking for birds' nests. "I wonder if we are to go down this lane," said Ellen, "it looks dark and dirty, and I don't see that it leads to the White Horse Hill; yet papa and mamma are coming towards the gate too. George, ask those boys where the lane leads to, will you?"—"Hoy!" shouted George, "where does this lane go to, my lads?"—"Thik thire laine? he do only go to zome cowvields: I thouted every body did knaw where 'Dead Man's Hollow' do lead to,'" added the boy saucily; then laughing at his wit, they both ran off. Poor Alfred fairly tumbled off the gate with sheer terror, when he found that they were so near the fatal spot that Sam had described. His brother and sister knew nothing of the Witch story; so they merely wondered at the strange name, and prepared to get over the gate, as their parents had just come up. Alfred's alarm was not observed, and he was ashamed that it should be; so he followed George and Ellen, but kept close to his mother's side, that he might find an opportunity of telling her the name of the lane to which they had come. Mrs Weston little suspected that the timid boy had been so terrified; but she talked and laughed with him, to keep up his spirits, supposing that the gloom of the lane only was the cause of his little anxious face looking so pale. The evening had drawn in, and a fine calm moon came over the brow of the Downs full upon them, as they still went

on down this dreary lane. Mrs W. had given up all hope of finding the object of her search, when the two elder children came running back, saying they heard groans! Alfred clung to his mother's arm, and said, "Oh don't go! don't go! it's the Witch! it's the Witch!"—"What Witch?" Where? What do you mean?" exclaimed George and Ellen at once. "Stay with your brother, my dears!" said Mrs W. "your father and I will go on; some poor creature is evidently in pain, and it is our duty to assist, whoever it may be: silly children are better out of the way," added she, looking at Alfred, and speaking sharply, in order to alter the subject of his thoughts. Mr W. walked on while she spoke, and she turned to follow him; the three young people preferred going also, to being left behind; so they went slowly after their mother. The lane suddenly widened, and under one of the high banks stood a cow shed, whence the groans proceeded. Mr and Mrs W. hurried towards it, and went in. By the glare of the western sky that gleamed in at the door, they saw a heap of straw, and by the rustle among it, they knew that some person was lying on it, and had noticed their entrance. The groans had ceased, but a low aged voice now said, "I am dying for want of food!"—"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs Weston, "where shall we procure any? it ought to be given immediately!" Ellen had crept to the door, and now said, "Farmer Wayland's is the last house we passed, mamma, shall——" "True," said Mr W. "bid George run across and beg some

assistance." But George would not stir! "I do not like to go, I don't know the way,—I——"—"Oh the poor thing will die!" exclaimed Ellen, "I'll go!" and off she darted; her brothers abashed and yet delighted with her courage, watched her flying steps, as her light figure bounded through the gloom, catching the glimpses of twilight, as it shone through the trees on her white dress, till she was entirely lost to their view! They then turned away as if ashamed to look each other in the face, and listened to the conversation in the hut.

George suddenly recollected that he had a bit of biscuit in his pocket, and wondered if it would be of any use to the poor creature; so he went in, and asked his mother. She was supporting a feeble old woman, whom Mr Weston had assisted to raise. A broken basin stood beside the straw, which fortunately contained water; so Mr W. broke the biscuit into small pieces, and soaked it in the water; then his wife placed a piece within the poor woman's lips, for she was too weak to move. She eat it, and then more was given, until the little stock was gone; they were then obliged to wait for farther assistance. Fortunately, this little refreshment had been of service; it had stayed the dreadful cravings of hunger, and the poor sufferer had fallen asleep. In the mean time, the kind hearted and courageous Ellen flew over the wide fields, startling the cattle with her speed, and now and then stumbling over the uneven clayey ground: she saw, at a distance, the dark mass of buildings, called Marsh Farm, that belonged to Mr

Wayland, and made her way to it over hedge and ditch, for she could find no path; and at last, when almost ready to sink with fatigue, she found herself at the cow-yard gate. She had slackened the strings of her bonnet, which hung behind her; and now running towards a light, in the house, she burst through the open door, and into the kitchen, where sat the farmer, with his back towards her, a jug of ale standing beside him, and a pipe in his mouth.—"Oh, sir!" was all poor Ellen could say; she had not breath to utter another word, but staggered into a chair, and panted like a hunted hare.—"Well! what do'st want Becky?" said the cosy farmer, without turning his head; for he supposed it must be his servant who spoke.—"Pray, sir, be so kind as send or go with something to eat or drink to the dark lane!" said Ellen, who had a little recovered her breath. The wonder-struck farmer, on hearing these words, drew his pipe from his mouth, and leisurely turning himself round on his chair, fixed his great round eyes full upon the little girl. Astonishment kept him dumb. She feared he was going to abuse her; and almost dreaded to speak again. When he exclaimed, "God bless the soul and body of me! how in these worl did thee get in here? Wha be'st thee? Where did thee bring thy pretty vace from?" Becky had heard the unusual noise and talking, so she very naturally had come to see what caused it: she stood as much amazed at poor Ellen as her master was; but her sharper wit sooner came to her aid than his did. "The Lord be good unto I if it beant Miss Weston,

master!" "Miss Wha!" said he, still staring at the little girl as if his senses never would be able to understand the scene.—"I beg your pardon, sir," said Ellen, "for coming in so rudely; but there is a poor woman dying in the old lane near here for want of food."—"Uz a undeed!" interrupted Becky, "and so papa and mamma are with her, and I ran to your house, because it's the nearest, to beg you to send something for her, and——"—"Ez zure, my dear, now I do know what it all do mean; we'll zee what we can do for she."—"But, sir," replied Ellen, "how shall we take her away from that dreadful shed; she cannot walk, I am sure; and I know papa and mamma won't like to leave her there all night!"—"Oh that trouble be zoon matched. Dick shall put th'ould horse in the cart, and he shall vetch her here; she can zleep in the tally (hay-loft), and in the morning Mr Weston can zay what he'll have done wi' she."—"Thank you, sir, thank you," said Ellen, who longed to see them a little quicker in their movements. "Now if you please to give me something for her to eat, poor thing! I'll run back with it, and the cart can follow as soon as you please;" and she looked very earnestly at some bread on the table.—"A little broth, measter, wi' a thought of bread sopped in it; there are a little what was leaved after dinner."—"Oh, any thing!" said the anxious girl, who hardly gave Becky time to pour the broth into the basin."—"Stay, miss, my pretty maiden, it do zeem to I that a thought of wine (that is, a little) would be a——"
"Oh dear, yes! here's a cup I declare, I can carry

them both;" and she held out the cup before the slow moving farmer had fumbled the key of the wine closet out of his vast pocket. At last the little active creature tripped away with her hands full of refreshment for the poor sufferer. As she hastened towards the lane, she heard a voice calling her loudly; and looking back, saw a light moving, as if some one was running with a lanthorn; she was rather alarmed, for she had heard of a light called Will-with-a-wisp; but she soon recovered her spirits, and felt glad that Alfred was not with her, who of course would have been terrified. The voice now sounded nearer; and she plainly heard a female calling her; she stopped, and answered "here I am; is it you, Becky?"—"Oh how glad I be that I've comed up with ye. Maester thoughted as you'd want a light, and so heve a sent I with one; but I'd soonder go miles round than go down thic lane."—"Oh don't go then if you are afraid," said Ellen; "hang the ring of the lanthorn on my finger. Thank you; that will do; good night." At the gate of the lane she met her father, who had become alarmed, and was on his way to search for her. He gave her a kiss, and his blessing, in a tender and earnest manner, that filled her eyes with tears. She asked how the poor woman was, and hastened on, while she listened to her father's account of the refreshment they had already given her. In a quarter of an hour after Ellen's arrival, the wine, &c. had been of so much service, that the aged creature was so far recovered as to thank them gratefully for their kindness.

The cart soon arrived with farmer Wayland, as well as Dick; so with Mr Weston's assistance she was lifted into it, and laid gently on a heap of straw that had been placed ready for her. It moved off, and the party walked by the side of it. Mr W. arranged with the farmer respecting her accommodation, and thanked him for his kind attention. Alfred went along, thinking painfully on all that had happened. He sorrowed for the sufferings of the poor woman, yet could hardly think them real; for thought he, "if witches have power to hurt cattle, they can take them away; and if they can steal, they can eat; so how can they ever be hungry? Besides, the boys said that they can go without eating if they like! Now, if this terrible, I mean this poor woman should have only been shamming, that we might take pity on her, what a dreadful thing it will be! Perhaps, too, she will get up in the night and kill some more of farmer Wayland's cattle; for I dare say she will not think that it would be wicked and ungrateful to injure those who are kind to her! I've a great mind to tell the farmer about her; and yet I should not like to be laughed at. I wonder if she looks like any other old woman! Oh, what a shocking thing it is to be so frightened! Neither Ellen nor George, I dare say, feel all of a tremble as I do! How I wish I could take papa's advice, and not be terrified any more about such things; indeed he is so wise, that he must know if there are witches; and I do think I should quite have got over my fright at them if that foolish Sam had not told me any thing of this! I

wish he had'nt! and yet if he had not, this poor woman would most likely have died, for we got to her just in time! How lucky that mamma chose this walk!" Thus he wavered in his feelings and opinions, as he held his mother's arm; and was so wrapped up in his own thoughts, that he heared nothing of the conversation around him.

They had now arrived at March Farm; Mrs Weston saw the feeble, grateful creature comfortably settled for the night; promised to come again in the morning; and then with her family bid the farmer good evening. They reached home completely tired, Ellen especially, whom (they all felt) could not be loved too well. The next morning they were anxious to go and inquire how the poor stranger had passed the night; so as soon as the breakfast things were removed, they all set off. To their surprise and pleasure, they found her seated comfortably in the chimney corner: she had her breakfast; and Becky had assisted her to make herself neat before the arrival of her expected visitors. An old, but clean cap and kerchief, which the good-natured girl had given her, and her own ragged gown neatly put on, made her look quite comfortable; they saw at once that her face, aged and withered as it was, had a mild and intelligent expression; and they all naturally wondered how any one, who looked so superior to a mere beggar, should have been reduced to such a state of misery, as that in which they had found her. After thanking Mr and Mrs Weston, for their kindness to her, (which she did in very few words, for tears choked her

voice,) she said, " You will perhaps be so good as to listen to my sad story, for you must wonder to see a fellow-creature in such distress as I was, when you so humanely saved me from dying last night."—Mrs W. begged she would inform them of her sorrow, and she continued, " My name is Alice Gray. I am an American: my husband was a sailor, and used frequently to cross the sea from New York to Liverpool. I had two sons, who came to this country some years since: my husband died ten years ago: I longed to end my own days with my boys; one of them is married and settled in Devonshire; the other lived at Manchester; he was ingenious, and had invented a machine for winding cotton, that was much approved, so that he had a tolerably good business; and he sent for me over to live with him. In the mean time the cotton trade fell off so rapidly, that he had no sale for his machine; and by the time I arrived, he had been obliged to become a common weaver. Distress increased; and he, as well as thousands besides, could get but one day's work in a week; after that, none at all! He was always weakly; and grief, that he had induced me to come over from a land of abundance to starve, or all but starve with him, broke his heart!" An inward groan here stopped poor Alice for a moment; but she soon continued. " His parish was not my parish; and I could get no relief! Every thing had been sold, but his gilt watch-seal, that I could not part with! here it is!" said she, drawing it from her bosom, where it hung tied with twine, while a gush of sorrow shook her aged frame as if it would

have killed her! "With this relic of a kind and broken heart, I set out to beg my way to my other son at Chagford, on the borders of Dartmoor. I wrote to him some weeks before I left Manchester, telling him of his brother's death and of my poverty, stating too, that I must now come to him; but I waited in vain for a reply! no letter came! Much have I suffered! and I fell ill from fatigue and hunger in the dark lane. Like Naomi I wandered in a strange land; but I have no Ruth to bear *me* company! no voice bids *me* hope! no heart welcomes me! no hand ever presses mine! A husband dead, a son gone! I have but one stay, one link left—and he may be dead too! Oh the bitter agony of a *lone* heart! oh the mournful solitude of a sojourn in a foreign land!" Here her faltering voice died away. Ellen's tears had been rolling unnoticed down her pale cheeks, as the forlorn Alice told her tale; Alfred's loud sob sent him hastily from the room; George too, drew his hand across his eyes; and their parents looked at each other, and at the afflicted one, in mute anguish! oh, what a tale of suffering it was! How few words had told the misery of years!

Mrs W. shook off her own feelings, and calmed her voice, in order to comfort the great sorrow before her. She arose, and placed her chair close to that of Alice, and taking her hand, which, though wrinkled, was delicate and slender as her own, she said, "*I* will be a Ruth to you! 'whither *I* go, *thou* shalt go!' take comfort! although a stranger, I can feel for you as a daughter! we will quickly know whether your other son

be living; and if he is, and you prefer to be with him, you shall go; if not, you shall stay with us. You are not, surely, the wife of a common sailor!"—"You have poured balm into a wounded heart," replied Alice, "and may God reward you!—you have also drawn a secret from me that I meant to have carried to the grave with me.—My husband was a *captain*, but of a PIRATE ship; which I knew not till I had been married to him some months; and he, with his lawless crew, was lost at sea. My parents were persons of respectability, but they never forgave my marriage. The truth of all, I have told you (but my heart would break before I could utter a *lie)* I *can* and *will* prove, or you shall never be the friend of Alice Gray!" added she, as she respectfully kissed the hand of the kind Mrs Weston. The loud footsteps of farmer Wayland now sounded heavily along the stone passage; and he came into the kitchen, accompanied by Alfred. After some conversation had passed, respecting Alice's improved health, Mrs W. said to the farmer, "I am sorry to hear, Mr Wayland, that you have had losses among your cattle; have you discovered the cause of their death? and she looked archly at Alfred: but he was too much distressed to smile. "Why, yez, ma'am, I have a bin onlucky to be sure; 'twere as vine a *colf* az you need wish to zet yer eyes on; and I'm sure if I'd a knaw'd that thick there yew tree would a *pizoned* my cattle, it should a been grubb'd up long agone!—but"—— "Oh, then, the calf was poisoned by eating yew boughs, was it?" asked Mrs W., with another glance at Alfred. "Ez, zure, ma'am: I had her opened, and the yew were found in

the stomach. My old sow staked herself, poor thing! a trying to get over a hedge that had baen cut; she were found, quite dead, near the hedge where she were hurted: the other were a little sucking pig, that got squeezed in the yard gate."—"I heard a very different account, farmer, respecting them; that a *witch* was supposed to have done the mischief."—"Ha! ha! ha! Naw, naw, ma'am, *I* never zeed or heard of any body as had zeed a witch in this worl; stories of them craturs is only told to frighten little children," replied the farmer. Poor Alfred! he felt the most silly boy on earth! he supposed every body knew his thoughts, his feelings, and his terrors; he could not have looked at Alice then, for the wealth of the world; but the reflection that he had supposed such a person could be capable of such crimes, made him miserable: he felt as if he had done her wrong, and wished, with all his heart, that she had been alone with him, that he might tell her how foolish he had been, and beg her to forgive him. His mother watched the changes of his countenance, and pretty nearly guessed his thoughts: she was grieved for him, but she judged that the lesson, though severe, would be a useful one.

Great was Sally Stubbs' astonishment, about an hour afterwards, to see her neighbours, the Westons, pass her cottage, in company with and supporting the tottering steps of an old ragged woman! In half a minute, she had settled the whole affair to her own satisfaction; so, as soon as they had passed slowly on, she hastened by a nearer path over a style to the farm, to tell her gossiping crony Sam, that "his measter had found the

witch as had killed Wayland's cows, and they were all guarding her, so that she could not get away; and so she was to be taken before a magistrate." Sam's eyes and mouth were set open half an inch wider than usual, and his hat appeared to stick at the back of his head, by miracle, as he watched the party coming up to the farm; he wondered if there was water enough in the horse-pond to duck her; hoped he should help to souse the "wicked old hag;" so that nothing could exceed his astonishment when he saw how carefully and tenderly his master and mistress helped her up the high step of the gate, and led her into the house!

The remainder of the clothes that had belonged to old Mrs Weston, and which had not been given away, were devoted to the use of Alice, so that her appearance soon became really respectable; she also looked ten years younger: distress had made her seem much older than she really was.

A letter was immediately sent off to Ralph Gray, at Chagford; and before an answer was received, Alice had become a universal favourite. Even Sam began to experience a kindly feeling towards old women in general, for *her* sake, who had so pleasantly disappointed his notions of witches. Fortunately she was the first of the sisterhood that he had ever seen, and she proved so gentle and respectable a specimen, that his unformed mind ever afterwards confused the idea of witchcraft with that of meekness, good sense, and kindness. Mr Merton's family had been made acquainted with Alice and her story, when they came to tea, on the day she arrived at Smallridge Farm; and the number of her friends

was therefore increased; for it was impossible not to love, pity, and respect a person of her manners, misfortunes, and character. Ralph Gray, or rather Mr Ralph Gray, a respectable auctioneer at Chagford, wrote with gratitude to Mr Weston for his great goodness to his mother; spoke of her with affection and respect; mentioned his uneasiness at hearing no tidings of her, having written to New York several times; stated that the letter she named, as having been sent to him, had never reached him, but had probably been mis-sent to *Chatford;* and the letter concluded with a few words of affection to his mother; and an assurance that he would be with her to take her home with him in a day or two after the communication should arrive.

It is hard to say whether joy or sorrow was most felt at the farm on the receipt of this letter; the children, particularly the sensitive and placid Alfred, loved her so much, that he grieved to part from her; yet he certainly felt the most delighted of them all to know that she was no longer a 'lone woman,' that she had a kind son, and a comfortable home to go to! The delightful stories, too, which she told them, 'all true,' of shipwrecks, and pirates, and ocean wonders, made him seek her society and enjoy it beyond measure. Such attachment could not fail to touch the heart of the late desolate wanderer; her love and gratitude were fervent for the whole amiable family; but Alfred had so twined himself into her affections, that she clung to the little boy with almost painful fondness, when the time for her departure drew near! Her son had arrived at the farm, and had pleased all the family by

his manners, and by his evident affection for his worthy mother. He was spared the shock of hearing the misery in which she had been discovered by her kind friends; no one could have borne to tell him. Alice left the farm on the following day in a post chaise, with Mr Gray; the parting was painful to all parties, but Alfred would not be consoled till his old friend had promised to write frequently; her son added, he hoped that the promise Mr Weston had given him for himself and family, to pass the next Christmas at Chagford, would not be forgotten; and said, as he shook hands with Alfred: "There are only nine months to pass away, my dear child, before you will see my mother again; you will find a playmate, too, in my son Richard, so keep up your spirits and write often. God bless you! good bye!" Alice waved her hand, but she could not speak; and Alfred staid at the gate looking down the lane at the wheel marks of the chaise, till the last faint noise of it had died away.

In less than a fortnight from the time that the good Alice left Wiltshire, a large parcel came, directed to Mr Weston: it was from their grateful friend. The family was all together when it was opened, and eagerly did the little Alfred's eyes run over the addresses of the letters, till he found one directed to 'Master Alfred Weston.' He cared for nothing more, but sat down by the window to read it. After many affectionate expressions, Alice continued:—"I little thought five weeks ago, my dear child, that I should ever have an opportunity of offering you any thing belonging to me, except my love and gratitude; you may therefore imagine my delight in being able to send you a token

of my regard, which *you* will like better than a splendid gift, for it once belonged to me, in happier days, I was going to say; but I never knew happier than those I now enjoy; my past sufferings have taught me to value as I ought, my present comforts. My watch, dear Alfred, is the token I speak of; Ralph brought it with him from America as a keepsake from me; he has, however, given it to me to present to you, and he has added the chain and seal, that you may have no excuse for not wearing it directly: he hopes you will like them. My unfortunate husband had a large library well stocked with works relating to his own hazardous profession; many of these my son brought with him, and from them I have selected two or three that I thought you, and your brother and sister, would like; give them, with my grateful love, to both: dear Ellen will, I hope, wear the pearl ring for my sake. I long exceedingly to see you all, dear, kind children! and much as I have been lately loaded with blessings, I still hope that I have another mercy in store; and that is to welcome to *my* home, those who made *their* home a 'haven of rest' to the *once* destitute,

"but now happy,

"and ever grateful,

"ALICE GRAY."

The other letters from both mother and son, were overflowing with gratitude and feeling: the presents to Mr and Mrs Weston were chiefly American curiosities; for Mr Gray was fond of his native country, and kept up a constant correspondence with friends in America; and he took great delight in every thing that came from 'the land of his birth.'

These proofs of remembrance from their friends, gratified the whole family; and the delicacy of sending curiosities instead of costly presents to Mr and Mrs W. was not lost upon them. Clara and Frederick came up the garden while they were in the midst of their *rummage*, and eagerly joined in the praises of their late inmate.

Then Clara said, "Ellen, I have walked over to tell you that Mrs Rogers is coming to-morrow, and I hope you will come over to see her; but bless me, how rude I am!" and she turned to Mrs Weston,—"here is a note from mamma for you, and I really quite forgot it in the bustle that was caused by the parcel from Alice." Mrs Weston smiled, and told her she would try and forgive her. "I see," added she, "that your father and mother wish us to meet your good friend. I will not write a note, but will punish you by making you my messenger. "My love," said she, turning to her husband, who was talking of chemistry with Fred., "you will go, I suppose?"—"You know, my dear, that Farmer Wayland has appointed three o'clock to be with me, in order to settle respecting the farm." —"Oh we can dine at *any* hour," said Clara.— "Thank you, my love; but I will send a note requesting the good man to be here by one; and that will allow me time enough. You know, I suppose, that he intends to become the purchaser of Smallridge farm?"—"No, indeed, I did not, said Fred."—"Ah, then we shall soon lose our dear friends," said Clara, with a sigh: and oh what different inhabitants the old farm will contain!"—"You will not lose us by my consent, dear Clara," said Mrs W. "for if your father

and mother will spare you and your brother, we hope to run away with you both to Blackheath for a few months."—"Is it possible! oh how very much I am obliged to you," replied she; "and I too," said Fred.; but I do not believe that my father will spare me," added he, sorrowfully.—"We shall see; and depend on it, we will try hard to persuade him," said Mr W. good-humouredly.—"There is a shower coming over, Clara," said Fred. looking out of the window, "come, we must hasten." They then took leave, and talked all the way home of their hopes and fears respecting their visit to Blackheath. Their friends came to dinner, were pleased with the well-informed Mrs Rogers, and gladly added her to their list of country acquaintances. Clara and Frederick had the satisfaction of hearing, before the evening closed, that they were to accompany their friends when they should leave Wiltshire, which would be a month: and their delight was not greater than that of the young Westons.

Farmer Wayland became the purchaser of Smallridge, and the travellers left the country in the month of May.

Alfred's last act was to write to Alice, to tell her of their change of residence, and to beg her to write soon to him: and as they drove down the lane from the farm, he thought how strange it was that he had ever been afraid of witches; for when he tried to think of those beings which his imagination had once fancied so horrid, he was like Sam, and could not help seeing in his 'mind's eye,' the gentle, sensible countenance of *Alice Gray*.

THE

CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE.

TALE THE FIFTH.

DISOBEDIENCE;

OR,

THE YOUNG SPANISH SOLDIER.

NEAR the western foot of that fine ridge of mountains in the heart of Spain, called *Sierra Blanco*, the little village of Maro is situated. Between this pretty spot, and the hills, is a large forest composed of ilex, (or evergreen oak,) and cork trees: the occupation of barking the latter is the chief employment of many of the villagers. The inhabitants of Spain (with the exception of the people of Valentia) are by no means industrious; so that many advantages, which their beautiful country possesses, are lost, because owners have neither energy nor habits of diligence; large tracts of land lie barren for want of tillage; and the lazy peasantry frequently content themselves with fruit and onions, rather than take the trouble of

ploughing the ground, to procure themselves a constant supply of bread. The little village of Maro was not without its idlers; but, owing to the good example which was set them by one little family, there was more neatness, and a greater appearance of comfort about it, than the small towns of Spain usually present. Pierre Clerac, and his wife Ninon, were natives of France; but they had lived at Maro ever since their marriage; that is, about eighteen years. They were an honest industrious couple; and the French customs which they had introduced into the village, together with the superior comforts which they enjoyed, in consequence of their industry, made their neighbours respect them, and imitate their manners. Pierre Clerac had three children. Henri, the eldest, was fifteen years of age; Amie was twelve; and little Marget was only six years old, when this tale begins.

Henri was a fine, lively, high-spirited youth, the idol of his sister Amie, and the champion of the village: under his command the boys made valiant assaults in the neighbouring forest on the smaller wild animals: the wolves were left for stronger arms to conquer. Henri assisted his father in the occupation of barking the cork trees, and tending the sheep, which are celebrated for their valuable wool; he was too the life and delight of the village at the pleasant season of the vintage. Amie was equally useful; but she chiefly assisted her mother in their little domestic concerns; and on the fine evenings of that delicious climate, she was one of the merriest and prettiest among the groupes that danced on the green,

to the sound of the guitar. The French vivacity, with her tasteful manner of dressing, made her quite the *belle* of the village: she often wore a black silk apron, with broad shoulder-straps; and sometimes hiding her brown curling hair in a bright-coloured French kerchief, instead of gathering her ringlets into one of the scarlet nets that are so generally worn among the female peasantry of that part of Spain.

The native dance of the country, the *fandango*, was sometimes omitted, and the French *contre dânce*, (which is the origin of our country dance), was substituted; castanets rattled in the dancers' hands; and the twanging sound of the guitar floated on the breeze, and enlivened those of the village, who were unable to join the groupes.

One evening their amusements was interrupted by the arrival of a muleteer, who was driving his mules across the country from Molina to Huete. In the remote village of Maro news is seldom heard, so all left off dancing, and eagerly crowded round their visitor, who was hospitably entertained under the broad spreading chesnut-trees, with wine, fruit, and barley-bread: while he refreshed himself he told this most important intelligence; that Napoleon, emperor of France, had resolved to attack Spain, and was sending one hundred and fifty thousand men to Madrid, in order (as it was reported) to place his brother Joseph on the throne of Spain. Great was the consternation which this information produced. Some exclaimed against the "tyrant;" some doubted the truth of the account; many shuddered with fera

of the horrors of war; and some few hardy, courageous spirits, among whom was Henri, heard the rumour with gladness; and longed to join their countrymen in defence of their country.

As the little family of Pierre Clerac sat that evening at their humble meal, Henri, who had hitherto remained silent, with his eyes flashing, and his cheeks glowing, said to his father, "What a tyrant Napoleon must be to try and conquer a country that wishes to live at peace with him! How glad I should be to hear that he is killed!"—"Yes, Henri, he is an ambitious man; that is his greatest fault; but think what he has done for France, for my country!" added he proudly; then continued: "Don't you remember how pleased you were when I read you your uncle's letter which we received two years ago, after the glorious battle of Austrelitz; how you longed to be fighting by the side of your uncle, and with the emperor; how you wept, and envied their having covered themselves with glory, and *you* not there to share it? Yet now you call the great emperor "tyrant," and wish him dead!"—"Yes, father," replied Henri, "I remember it; I always wished to be a soldier, and I should have been glad to join my uncle; but *then* Napoleon had not attacked *Spain*, which is *my* country, you know: now I hope I shall help to drive the French back again over the Pyrenees: you will let me be a soldier; won't you, father?" said Henri, looking eagerly and anxiously on Pierre's face, for the boy knew how much the soldier's life was disliked by his parents. Pierre glanced at his wife Ninon, and then at Amie,

who both sat pale and breathless for his answer; and then he said, "Henri, the men whom you wish to murder,——"—"Murder, father!" interrupted his son.—"Well, then, slaughter, shoot, cut, maim, choose which word you please, you cannot drive them into France without bloodshed, so we will call the murder by a milder name. These men whom you wish to fight with, are my countrymen; and my own brother, perhaps, will be amongst them, for he is in Napoleon's Imperial guard; I, therefore, could not, and would not attack my fellow-countrymen, even if I had not so great a dislike to the trade of war, as you know I have. I shall not take up arms; but if our village should be attacked by the invaders, I will do my best to defend those whom it will be my duty to protect: as to you, I have too often expressed my dislike to the cruel life of a soldier for me to fear that you will become one! You could not break your mother's heart, and distress us all, by such conduct; could you, Henri?" and he held out his hand to his son, who hastily shook it, and left the room. He was grieved and sadly disappointed by his father's refusal; for he hoped as there was now a want of soldiers in the country, and as thousands were flocking to Madrid, so the muleteer had said, in order to be regularly trained and *accoutred*, (that is, equipped or furnished with every thing necessary for a soldier,) Henri hoped that he should have obtained his father's consent.

He walked swiftly down the village towards the house of his chief friend and companion, Lopez Riba, that he might talk over his vexation with one who

could pity him; for Lopez longed as much as his friend Henri to share in the glory of fighting for his country! They met in the narrow street, as Lopez was coming to Clerac's dwelling. "Bad news, bad news, Lopez!" said Henri, sorrowfully, "my father has told me just now that I must not be a soldier!"—"Holy Mother! you don't say so," replied his friend; "then we are both in the same situation; for *my* father and mother are just as spiteful as yours are; but I *will* go!"—"Oh don't call them spiteful; they are afraid we shall get wounded."—"Sancta Maria! what stuff you talk: I tell you it's only done to cross us, and I won't be crossed."—"Well, Lopez, I don't like to be crossed any more than you; but we cannot help ourselves, so let us try and forget our vexations."—"Why what a Father Paul thou art become all of a sudden, Henri! one of the monks at the monastery yonder could not have preached better than thou didst. I hate preaching, (the Virgin forgive me!) so good night to you. I'll go down to Pedro Avia, and consult with him about our going; that boy has five times your courage!" and away he ran, leaving poor Henri to return home full of anger, grief, and resentment. He passed a sleepless night; and the next morning, at the earliest peep of dawn, he arose, and strolled out into the forest, to search for some object with which he might employ himself, and drive away thought. He wandered on through tracks well known to him, but to few besides: he had always loved these wild solitudes; though an uneducated boy, he was not an ignorant one; his disposition was active, his observation acute,

and his remarks sensible:—he was kind and affectionate at home; good-tempered and courageous among his companions. Henri knew a good deal of natural history, from his own close attention to the habits and haunts of the birds and wild animals around him; and he was always appealed to by the other boys in all their difficulties. He had now thrown himself down at the foot of an ilex, to watch the tricksy leapings of a squirrel; and having traced it from the boughs of the tree to the summit of a craggy mass of limestone rock, which its branches overhung; he concluded that the little creature had reached its nest, so he resolved to climb the steep front of the rock, by clinging to the stems of the ivy and various shrubs that grew out from it, in order to see the nest. He began his scramble, and had nearly reached a large bush of juniper that crowned the broken summit; indeed, he had caught the tip of one of its fragrant tufts in his toiling hand, when, in the act of springing up, his foot pushed away the whole mass of rock and bushes, up which he had climbed, and down he rolled with the ruin all about him. His fall was fortunately broken by the stem and tendrils of the clasping ivy that had bound the loose fragments to the rock; had he fallen beneath the stones, he would have been killed: as it was, surprize at the singular and unexpected accident, kept him quiet where he had tumbled; but what was his astonishment, when he did raise himself from his bonds of ivy, and other creeping shrubs, to see the huge dark mouth of a gloomy cavern where the stones had stood, and the bushes had grown! He rubbed

his eyes, and sat up in the midst of his ruin, quite a picture of wonder! He almost fancied that an earthquake had dislodged the face of the rock, and shewn him the internal parts of the mound; then he feared he was in a dream; so wonderful did it appear to him that a cavern should exist there, and he not know it! The sun had just risen, and a fresh breeze with it, which cleared away the dust that had been made by the fall; but the mouth of the cave was towards the west, so no light shone in to guide him in the search he was resolved to make. He disentangled himself, and went boldly into the dark cavern, which echoed his footsteps as he walked: it appeared to be of great extent; but owing to the want of light, he could not discover its size, nor could he find any proof of its having ever been inhabited; still, the stones being piled up at the entrance, seemed an evidence that, at some time, it had been made use of, and then had been abandoned. Suddenly he recollected the story of 'Gil Blas,' which his father had so often told him, on long winter evenings, every word of which he believed to be true; and he at once settled that *this* must be *Gil Blas' Cavern!* Delighted with his discovery, and yet, feeling a little terror at the thought of being alone in the cave of a horde of banditti, where perhaps twenty murders had been committed, he certainly quickened his steps, and gladly found himself again in the warm and cheerful sunshine. He then tried to replace the stones at the entrance, which he accomplished after much toil and difficulty. He found that the bushes of juniper, clumps of heath, &c. had been planted in little

hollows, contrived on purpose, in the stones, that they might have the appearance of growing naturally, in order that the mouth of the cave should not be discovered by any person who might be wandering in the forest. Henri had been so occupied by his little adventure, that he had forgotten his military disappointment, and also forgotten to return home for his frugal breakfast of barley bread and milk. He now, however, turned his steps homewards; and on his way, as he was thinking whether he should keep his discovery a secret, or tell it to his sister Amie, he met Lopez, who was driving his sheep to water. Henri would have passed him without speaking, for he could not forget their parting on the preceding night, but Lopez smiled, and good temper always won Henri's heart. What do you think?" said Riba, "Pedro and I are resolved to go to Madrid, and be made soldiers; we settled it all last night; but we want you to join us so much, Henri, that I think I shall hardly like to go without you. You will go, won't you?"—"Oh no, Lopez!" replied Henri, sighing, "I cannot be so cruel to my poor mother and Amie; and I ought not to disobey my good father, who hates the trade of blood, as he calls being a soldier. No, Lopez, I cannot go! yet it will be a dreadful trial to part with you, and to know that you are fighting for our country like a hero, while I am lying about under the trees, or dangling after those stupid, quiet sheep:—how I hate sheep! they are so tiresome and gentle! I would rather have to watch a pack of wolves, I declare; they would give one some trouble, and frighten one, and make a bustle

in one's life! How I love any thing that makes one shew a little courage! Ah, Lopez, you are a happy fellow! What would I give to be going with you!" —"Mass! if ever I heard such a fool and a coward in——" "*Coward*, Lopez!" cried Henri, with a start and a flashing eye, that made even the bold Riba wince.—"Well, hear why I call you so, before you fly in such a passion," replied Lopez: "you talk of wishing to go to fight for our country and our holy religion, as Father Paulo told us in his sermon last sunday; and yet you won't, for fear your father should be angry with you—your mother should sigh—and pretty Amie should cry! And these are your reasons for refusing to become a noble soldier, and one of the saviours of your country! Ha! ha! ha! Can you wonder that I called you coward? Can any thing look more like cowardice, than to pretend that you are sorry not to go, when nothing in the world but your own fears prevent you from joining our courageous little party; for Diego Sangro is going also; and you know, we used always to think that he had no more courage in him than a rabbit! Well, well, how easy it is to gain a fine name! You have been looked up to by us fools of boys as the most noble-spirited fellow among us all; and here is this very bold Señor going to stay at home and fight the fierce squirrels that he may meet with in the forest, while Lopez Riba, Pedro Avia, and the valiant Diego Sangra, are going this very night to begin their 'career of glory,' as Father Paulo says. Good morning to you, most illustrious and courageous Señor Henri Clerac!" added the

sneering boy, bowing low, and passing on. His cutting words were almost more than Henri's temper could endure; and his trembling frame, and varying colour, proved to Lopez how keenly he felt the cruelty and injustice of his assertions. This was exactly the point at which Riba was aiming: he really liked Henri; knew him to be the soul of courage; was confident of his forbearance and good-nature; and yet was base enough to wish him to disobey and leave his kind parents, that some excuse might be made for his own wicked intention, of running away from a sick father, and an almost heart-broken mother. "Stay, Lopez, stay!" said Henri, hastily, and Riba gladly turned. "Well? be quick," said he, "for I must follow the sheep:—do you want to say farewell? I dare say we shall not meet again, for our time of starting will be eleven to-night, when all the village will be asleep.—Good bye, Henri!" The artful boy saw Henri's struggle with his feelings, and therefore hurried him, that he might not have time for cool reflection. In these few moments many thoughts passed rapidly through young Clerac's mind. "Why should I stay," said he to himself, "when I wish so much to go? Lopez has a father and mother, as well as I, yet he does not mind leaving them." Here a painful feeling at his heart reminded him that the parents of Riba were very different persons from his own kind father and mother; but it did not suit his purpose just then, to consider how excellent they were. "Other people think," continued he, musing, "that the soldier's life is very honourable; why should my father object to it so, par-

ticularly as *I* like it! If all were of his mind, the country would be conquered!" He forgot to add, or rather, perhaps, did not reflect, that if all people were of his father's opinion on this matter, there would be no such cruel, dreadful, and unnatural affliction as *War*, in the world! Poor Henri, as many others, of twice his age have done, while arguing a subject, contrived to leave out those points that would not suit his own views of it. "Lopez," said he, at length, "I am no coward!"—"Nay, I have only your word for that, you know, Henri:—I know what *I think*, and what Pedro and Diego *said;* but that's of no consequence, so good bye!"—"Well, but I won't be thought a coward by any one!" said Henri, working himself into a towering passion, which was not lessened when he saw a sneering smile pass over Riba's face. "Lopez, I'll knock you down, if you dare to look in such a manner at me."—"I suppose you think that will shew you are not a coward. You know how much older and stronger you are than I am. I smiled because you said you won't be thought a coward: now our thoughts are free, you know; and if you don't *shew* any courage, you cannot expect that we should *see* it!"—"You are a mean and passionate fellow, Lopez; and if you had not interrupted me, you would have heard me add, that I will go with you to-night."—"Sancta Maria! how glad I am! I beg your pardon for saying any thing to vex you," replied Lopez: "do not alter your resolution:—give me your hand;—I'll see you again in the evening; but look at that stupid fool of a sheep! it has got its long tail entangled in the juniper bush.

Good bye: I must run and help her to get it out;" and away he scudded. Henri had now passed his word to join this soldiering party; and though he had misgivings that he had acted very weakly and wickedly, his fear of the taunts and ridicule of his young companions, was greater than the fear of deserving the anger of his good parents, and of grieving their affectionate hearts. He quickened his pace, and tried to think of every subject but that which led to his first act of selfish disobedience. The little family had finished their breakfast when he hurried in; no enquiries were made respecting his late arrival, which he rejoiced at, for he had no excuse to give, and would not tell a falsehood. "Amie!" said he, when they were alone for a minute; the tone of his voice, though he did not know, or intend it, was so melancholy, that she turned quickly round, and looked full at him; "What do you want, Henri? are you ill!"—"No," replied he, roused by her keen glance.—"Oh no, I wished only to know if you can go with me into the forest, after you have finished your work; I want to shew you something that I found to-day."—"Oh, then why did you not bring it with you? for I cannot well leave the house these three hours."—Henri smiled as he said, "It was too large to bring. What have you to do? Ask my mother to let Marget manage it for you, and do come."—"Poor Marget! she could not churn the butter for me, Henri! but if this thing cannot wait till evening, I'll ask my mother to let me run with you now." She did so, and returned immediately, saying she might go with him. They went out

directly, and Henri walked for a long time in silence by her side, finishing his breakfast, and lost in thought. Amie watched him from time to time, and felt certain that something very unusual caused his strange manner. At last he roused himself by a sudden effort, and said, "This way, Amie, this way; we shall soon be at the cave."—"Cave! what cave?" asked she.—"Follow me," continued he, "and remember the path, Amie, will you?—through these four ilexes; here, I'll notch them with my knife;—under that old cork tree; by this thick bunch of juniper; now by the two large chesnut trees,—and here it is!"—"Where!" said Amie, looking round, and then at her brother, with alarm; for his singular conduct quite astonished her. Henri pulled down the large stones, and the dark mouth of the cavern became visible to the girl's wondering eyes. They went in; but the darkness prevented their being able to explore any thing to their satisfaction. Amie thought with her brother, that this must be Gil Blas' cave, though they ought both to have recollected, that the cavern with that name, their father had told them, is situated in the Asturias, the most northern province of Spain. When they returned again into the air, Henri said, "Sit down, Amie, on this stone by me, I want to talk to you."—She sat down, still silently wondering.—"Sister! dear sister!" said he, and then burst into tears.—"Nay, don't ask me any thing," added he, hastily recovering himself, seeing that she was going to speak, "I want only to tell you that I found this cave by chance, this morning, and I could not help thinking

that it would be a most safe and capital hiding place for you—for us all, if there should be any alarm, from the French soldiery passing this way: so I thought I had better tell you of it, that you may bring my father and mother and Marget here."—"I? why not you, Henri!" said Amie quickly. He felt his cheeks tingle, and could not look in her eyes, as he replied, "Oh, I may not be at home, or I may be——" "Ah, Henri, Henri! I guess the dreadful truth,—you are going to leave us—going to be a frightful, terrible soldier; and I shall never, never be happy again!" sobbed the afflicted girl, as she flung her arms round her brother's neck, and wept violently.

This was too much for poor Henri; he felt that her grief would shake his resolution; so, kissing her cheek, for he could not speak, he got up suddenly, and began busily replacing the large stones which he had pulled down; then said firmly but tenderly to her, "Amie, I know you love me, so I need scarcely beg of you not to mention my resolution to any one: if you should name it, you will distress me; but you cannot, and shall not alter my determination."—"Our poor dear kind mother!" sighed Amie.—"Yes our dear kind mother," replied Henri, "I have not forgotten her; but my word is given, *and my country calls me!*" added he, with a proud look and tone, which he intended to be touching; but which was so very mock heroic, that, if Amie had not been in sorrow, she must have laughed at it heartily. She would have tried all her powers of persuasion, but he stopped her; so, finding him resolute, she dried her eyes, and strove not to

think of his departure, that she might give her attention to the situation of the cave, and the way to it.

Henri gathered great numbers of juniper berries, and scattered them as they went along; but knowing they would be devoured by the birds, he begged she would procure some sand, and return the next day to the cave, and sprinkle it on the spot, which was now strewed with berries; they would not be eaten by that time, he said. "Then you go to-night, Henri!" exclaimed she, "or you would offer to do that little service for me!" He made no reply, and her grief burst forth anew! "Dear Amie, pray do not weep so; I do not go alone; Lopez, Pedro, and Diego will go with me, so I shall not want companions, you find. Your eyes are so red, they will shew my father and mother that something is amiss; and my happy scheme will, I fear, be stopped." They proceeded in silence, and soon reached the village. Their walk through the heat, together with Amie's grief, had brought on a head-ache, which she was glad to avail herself of, in order to escape from observation. She went up stairs, and threw herself on her little pallet, where she wept for hours; and when her mother or Marget came up to inquire how she found herself, she feigned to be asleep. As the cool and quiet evening drew on, the merry voices of her young companions, assembling for their nightly dance, caught her ear. She arose, came down stairs, and went to the door to excuse herself from joining them; for she knew that many of them would come for her; besides she wished to pass the last hour or two, of her brother's stay, in

his company. His own feelings were any thing but pleasant; he had avoided the eyes of his kind and unsuspecting parents all day; and every affectionate sentence they had addressed to him, had given him a pang as if a dagger had struck him: but his greatest trial was when he took leave of them for the night! His courage then nearly gave way; the hand he offered to his father was cold; and it shook, in the warm affectionate grasp, which his good parent gave it. His son's low spirits, he supposed, were owing to Amie's head-ache, as well as to his own disappointment, in being refused to follow the profession he had chosen, therefore Pierre loved, pitied, and admired his son, for the gentle manner in which he appeared to bear his disappointment.

His mother's kiss was more affectionate than usual, from the same cause; so that the violent burst of grief which overcame him, as he received that tender kiss on his burning cheek, excited no other attention in her than a sigh for his supposed sorrow, in being obliged to give up his favourite profession. Amie had stolen out of the room; she could not have borne to take leave of him before her deceived and tranquil parents. He found her sitting on his bed and sobbing terribly. He had looked in at her room, and kissed the sleeping Marget; and he concluded that as Amie was not there, she must be in his own little chamber. When the unhappy girl could speak, she said, "Henri, I fear I am as guilty as you are; and if my mother should die of grief at your cruel conduct, I shall consider that I shall have been the chief cause of her

death; for if I had not been so foolishly fond of you, and so anxious to please you, I should have told this morning of your wild scheme, and you would have been prevented from going: indeed even now it is not too late; and I will go down this moment, and let her and my father know how cruel and disobedient you are!" and she had reached the door before Henri could stop her. "Amie, you unkind, foolish girl, come back!" said he angrily. "You will drive me to some mad plan, which you will be sorry for, if you don't take care: I told you this morning that I will go, and I now repeat it; nothing but killing me will prevent my becoming a soldier; so now do what mischief you please; for every thing you can do, will be mischievous, except your keeping silence. As to my dear mother's dying, because I wish to carry a gun instead of a sheep-hook, it is too ridiculous for me to notice. Come, do not let us part in anger. It is after ten o'clock, and Lopez will be under the mulberry-tree, outside the garden, at eleven. I shall take nothing with me, not even a shirt, for we expect to reach Madrid the day after to-morrow; it is not above eighty miles you know; we shall walk all night, and rest in the middle of the day; and when we become soldiers, our pay will commence; and we shall be supplied with every thing we can want; so don't be turning over my shirts and stockings so busily, my dear sister, for I shall take nothing." More terrified than convinced by her brother's reasoning, poor Amie could only weep her sad farewell. Henri waited impatiently, till he saw, by the sudden darkness on the

grass, beneath the window, (where the lamp from his parents' bed-room had shone,) that their light was extinguished; he then once more kissed his sister, and crept carefully down the few stairs, or rather steps, past his parents' room, and stole, like a guilty thing, out into the placid moon-light. Amie watched his gliding figure as it passed along the little garden; she then saw him climb the low wall, and lean from among the branches of the mulberry tree, which shook, with his weight, and then drop into the enclosure beyond. No sound of footsteps came upon the night breeze, to the anxious ear of poor Amie, whose pale face hung out of the little rustic casement, which was in deep shade; while the white glare of the cloudless moon fell full on her anxious countenance, and gave it an appearance so ghastly, that the four young heroes would have been likely, had they seen her, to consider it any thing but an encouraging prognostic of their success. She remained at the casement, till the night breeze chilled her, when she drew back into the desolate little room: here, however, every thing reminded her too powerfully of the dear imprudent wanderer; so she quitted it hastily, and quietly groped her way to her own bed; and as she crept to the side of the little Marget, she dreaded the coming of the morning, that must bring with it so much sorrow to the hearts of her kind parents. Amie quickly fell asleep, however; for youth, innocent youth, is not the season, when tedious wakefulness and sleepless sorrow, wear out the long, long night!

In the mean time, the four dauntless heroes scam-

pered off, more in the style which boys adopt, who rob vineyards and fear detection, than one would expect these valiant saviours of their country to have chosen; but so it was; and they soon left the sleeping village in a flood of moon-light, far behind them. Having gained the top of a hill, and listened whether footsteps were pursuing them; and being satisfied that their flight was yet unknown, the captain of the party, Lopez, proposed that they should strike into the forest, and continue their way more leisurely; "for," said he, "if we run at this rate, we shall be tired out before we shall have travelled five miles. You know I have been to Madrid once with my father, when he took his wool there for sale; and I remember that somewhere hereabouts, we left the great road, and struck off into the forest; for he said it shortened the distance, in the next thirty miles, very much: shall we go?"—"Just as you like, Lopez," replied Henri, "you know best." Pedro and Diego threw a suspicious glance at the black masses of forest foliage, that waved in the breeze, like giant plumes, nodding over the ghastly white stems, which gleamed like silver armour in the moon-light; and then said, they thought the road would be safer, and more pleasant, than going through the pathless forest. "Yes; but if we can save many miles, and hide ourselves more easily in case we should be pursued, we had better strike off from the great road," observed Lopez. "Certainly," replied Henri; "I shall follow you; Pedro and Diego will come too, I know: come, come along!" Avia and Sangro, however, were not at all

anxious to leave the clear open road, for the dismal shades: they both thought of banditti, but neither of them wished to be the first to mention their fears; till finding their persuasions of no use, Pedro ventured to observe, that he had heard something about a horde of robbers being in the forest: "Well, and what then?" said Lopez, laughing, "if there are robbers, and if they were to take us, do you think they would hurt such poor fellows as we are?—no, no; they would be likely enough to rob and murder us too, if we had money with us, but they would never take the trouble to mince up such meagre game as we four are!" The two reluctant boys,—though not at all convinced by Lopez,—turned to follow the steps of their valiant leader, and in five minutes they were trembling at every noise and every object in the forest.—"Hush!" said Pedro, suddenly; —"what noise was that?"—"Look!" added Diego, "something moves among those bushes! Pedro, let us run back!—I should like well enough to be a soldier, but I'll not be cut to pieces by a robber if I can help it!" —"Nor I," replied the brave Diego, "so run, Pedro, and I'll go with you:" good bye! good bye! said they, hurriedly, as they wheeled round, and scampered back towards the road, as if a dozen bandits were at their heels!

"Lopez," said Henri, "*Pedro has five times my courage*, has he not?"—"Ah well, when I said that, it was only to make you go with me! you know I never meant it, Henri; but let us see what those cowardly fools have terrified themselves about." The two heroes, on going up to the bushes, whence the noise proceeded, saw a

mule grazing quietly, and a muleteer lying fast asleep under a tree. They did not disturb him, but regained their track, laughing heartily at the folly and cowardice of their two faint-hearted comrades.

They went merrily on, Lopez talking of being a soldier, and Henri trying not to think of the sorrow which would be felt in a few hours in the village of Maro. They reached Madrid on the morning of the third day; nearly exhausted, and quite out of spirits. The long distance they had travelled, and the scanty supply of food that they had obtained, made them already feel something like repentance for their imprudent undertaking. They had supposed, that as they were going to join the army, which was being raised for the defence of the country, every one would be anxious to supply them with food and lodging; and that they should be admired and applauded for their valor: their self-love and pride were therefore sadly wounded, to find, that on many occasions, where they told their tale, and begged for provisions, they were treated with unkindness, and frequently turned into ridicule, for running away from home, and expecting to be made soldiers of. At Madrid, however, they found themselves at last; they inquired immediately for the proper persons who were to enrol them; were speedily enlisted, sent to be drilled, and were, in short, become *soldiers*. The whole city was in a commotion; the enemy had already passed the frontiers, (that is, the edge or limits of Spain, where it is separated from France;) troops were daily being sent off to oppose them; fresh parties of men, *raw recruits*, (that is, per-

sons who have never before borne arms,) and old soldiers, who had long been disbanded, were flocking into the city every hour; couriers were continually arriving, with the intelligence of the advance of the French army; every square was occupied with parties manœuvring, and young recruits, such as our two heroes, were learning their exercise; baggage wagons were being loaded and sent off; officers were prancing about on their beautiful long-tailed horses; arms, clothing, and provisions, were being carried to head-quarters; numbers of furious women were shouting and encouraging their countrymen to fight for their king and their holy religion; and to destroy every Frenchman that they could meet with. All was military bustle throughout the city. Henri and Lopez found themselves, in the evening, completely tired out. They were fortunately appointed to be in the same company; and in spite of their fatigue, found time to congratulate each other on that circumstance. They fell asleep on the floor of the guard-room, and, although surrounded by the unusual noises of soldiers under marching orders in a barrack, they slept soundly till morning. In the course of the day, they were well drilled again, and told that they would be sent off with the next detachment on the following morning. Arms were so scarce, that any kind of weapon was allowed to be carried by the soldiers; so Lopez, to his great indignation, had a pitchfork given him, and Henri was obliged to be contented with a stick, which had a bayonet fastened at the end of it! All this was very sad to our two youths, who had indulged them-

selves in visions of splendid, new, and well-fitted regimentals, muskets, shining cartouche boxes, bayonets, smart caps, feathers, music, precise marching, grand officers, regular pay, and comfortable *quarters!* (that is, *homes* provided for them wherever they go;) but thus it was; and the next morning the poor fellows were marched off towards the north, with these frightful weapons, "as if they were going to hunt wolves in the forest," Henri said; with scarcely a shoe between them, without a change of linen, or any thing to make them comfortable. They were told that on their arrival at Molina, they would find clothes, linen, &c.; but till that time, they must bear their hardships as they could. With heavy hearts, and aching limbs, they marched the next day out of the city. The ragged undisciplined company halted for the night in an obscure village, thirty miles from Madrid. Here they found that no provisions had been prepared for them, because they were not expected. Many of the houses were deserted, and their late inmates had fled into the woods, not daring to remain to be put to death by the invading French army, which was on its march to the capital. Those of the inhabitants who remained, had collected their provisions, which they had hidden, ready to take with them on the first real alarm; and these persons would not be prevailed on to give up to the tired soldiers, or even to sell them, the bacon, wine, flour, &c. that they had collected, fearing they should have no time to find more. The soldiers hearing that provisions were secreted in the village, and that the inhabitants would not part with them, became very

riotous, and threatened to set fire to every house, and murder every person who had kept the food from the famishing fellows who had come so far, and had taken up arms for the defence of such cruel and ungrateful monsters as these villagers. This threat induced the inhabitants to give up their hidden food. Many of the soldiers were too tired and too hungry to wait for any cooking; so they eat the bacon raw, mixed up a little flour and water, and swallowed it, washing down the unpleasant meal with a draught of sour wine; and then at once fell off to sleep, without moving from the spot where they had halted. Among these exhausted sufferers, were our two poor boys. As soon as morning dawned, their only drum raised the heavy sleepers to their toilsome march. They expected to travel but twenty miles on this day, as they were to meet another detachment of troops at a town only that distance from them. So many accounts had reached them since they left Madrid, of the enemy's rapid progress, that the officer who commanded our ragged squadron, was anxious to strengthen his little band with a greater number and better disciplined soldiers, before he should hazzard a skirmish with the enemy. After a hasty breakfast, on the same disagreeable and scanty fare that had formed their supper, the whole company moved forward. Henri disdained to complain of hardships which he had brought on himself, and which he rather felt proud of; but the pain he suffered from his feet, which were nearly bare to the ground, made his young cheeks waste and grow pale; but Lopez openly and louldy complained of the cruelty of suffering any

one to be so ill attended to, who devoted himself for the welfare of his country. He vented his ill-humour and disappointment, too, by reviling the provisions, and those whose duty it was to provide food for the detachment. A filthy-looking fellow, who marched near them, overheard these complaints, and told him to cheer up and hope for better times. "I served once in Germany under Napoleon," said he, "and"— "What! and now fight against him?" said Henri. "Oh yes; no odds for that, comrade," replied he, with a smile; "we soldiers, you know, fight to live, no matter who pays us, 'tis our trade, 'tis all one to me who I fight for or against; if I am to shoot men, what do I care whether they speak French, English, Dutch, Spanish, or Portuguese?" Henri felt sick at heart, and thought of his father's well-grounded dislike of such wretches; with a sigh of deep contrition for having caused him the grief of knowing that his son was become one of the companions of such a monster as this man who walked by his side! "But I was going to tell you, how uncertain the quarters of a soldier are, when once he is in a fair way for a battle: sometimes, after such a spare and wretched meal as we have made this morning, we have met with a party of the enemy; when a skirmish would follow, and perhaps he would be routed, and would leave all his baggage; then we used to fall too, and make a meal fit for a monk; pick and choose from the knapsacks of fresh linen; and turn out again, with all our clean shirts and new shoes, as comfortable as the finest lady in the land. Oh, you young fellows must not be down-hearted, we shall have

some nice pickings before long." In this way he talked to the two boys, good-naturedly enough, but shewing such a heartlessness in the cause for which the young breast of Henri was glowing, that the boy could not bear him, and left him to Lopez, with whose disposition he appeared to agree better.

Early in the evening they reached the village where they were to sleep; and our two friends gladly found that they were actually "billeted," (that is, lodged by order of their officers,) in a tidy looking house, belonging to an old saddler: he was named Lugo Mota, and his wife, Bertha.—They looked kindly on the wearied youths, and welcomed them in. Bertha busied herself in heating water for them to bathe their blistered feet, and old Lugo reached down a goodly piece of bacon, for his wife to fry with eggs and garlick, for their suppers: then he brought out a goat-skin of wine, and some fresh barley cakes, chesnuts, and bunches of dried grapes. The boys were too tired to utter a word; but stretched themselves on the hard benches, and half dozed the time away, till all should be prepared for them. They could not avoid hearing the kind-hearted creatures' pitying remarks on the forlorn condition of their guests; and Henri's tears trickled in fast showers down his cheeks, and through his hair, as he lay quietly listening, and thinking of his own happy home.—"Aye, poor children!" said Bertha, softly, "let them sleep; they may never have another sound nap till the last long rest that soldiers take; and it won't be long before these poor lads lie on the cold battle bed, if all be true, that is said of the cruel French!

How could their parents send such chicks as these away from their nests, *to fight, forsooth!*—Lugo, break these eggs, will you?—Poor boys! Look, here's a fit arm to carry a musket," said she, pointing to the small, uncovered shoulder of Lopez, who was little of his age.—" He ought, poor child! to be safe at home, tending sheep: but come, I must wake them now, the supper will get cold: here, draw the table nearer to them husband, will you, I'll just go and bring in a jug of water."—Lopez—the ungrateful proud-spirited Lopez, heard all the observations which the kind-hearted old woman made, and felt so indignant and hurt because she had called him *child*, that he felt to hate her; all her benevolent bustling attention, were thought nothing of, or if they were, he considered that she did no more than she ought for them. He had been taught many bad lessons from his worthless comrade, Rodri Guera, and soon showed that he had not been slow to learn. Bertha quickly returned, and then roused the boys, saying, as she shook them gently, " Come, my poor children, come; your supper is ready, and much good may it do you!"—" I am not a child, dame, and I'll thank you not to call me so again!—A stupid old fool, to be chattering about us instead of getting our supper ready quickly," continued Lopez, muttering; then raising himself to the table, and beginning to help himself to the first and best of every thing: " Come, Henri! why don't you begin," added he sulkily. " Stay, Lopez, stay! thank you, dame, for the nice supper you have cooked us; we have not tasted such a one this week!—but you will eat with us; and

you, Lugo?" said Henri, gratefully. "The saints defend us!" exclaimed Bertha, "who would think such a young thing could behave so!"—"Youngster!" said Lugo, fixing his large mild eyes full on the saucy Lopez, "you are no credit to your parents, I'm sure: learn to treat those kindly, who are kind to you; and do not oblige me to punish you for your ingratitude and insolence; eat the supper that has been cheerfully prepared for you, and keep your rude speech to yourself."—"*You* punish me, you old goat skin; *you* dare to be uncivil to a soldier belonging to the king! I'll have you up to our officers to-morrow, and you shall be punished! It is your duty to give us food and lodging, you dare not refuse to do it; so what have I to be grateful for?"—"Nay, if this is to be your behaviour, my young señor, I will soon rid myself of you, as I would of a troublesome cur;" so getting up, he quietly but firmly grasped the boy's arms, twisted them behind him; and in spite of his struggling and violence, dragged him out of the room, thrust him into the stable, and fastened the door; then calmly returned into the kitchen, collected into a wooden bowl a portion of each article of food, with a small pitcher of wine, and returned to the stable, saying, "If you make any noise, or give me the least trouble, I will report you to your commanding officer, and you will be punished to-morrow. Good night! eat your supper, and go to sleep; you will find plenty of clean straw in the inner empty stall, and the mule in the outer one is very quiet; she will not kick." Lopez made no reply; he found he was mastered, and he was so exceedingly mor-

tified, and in such a violent passion, that he could not have spoken if he had wished. Poor Henri was quite confounded and ashamed of his comrade's behaviour; his own disposition was so different, that he wondered at the insolence of Lopez. When Lugo returned, after taking the supper to the stable, Henri began to apologize for his friend; but his host stopped him, saying, "Don't mention a word about the matter, let us eat our bacon and eggs, and do you make haste to bed: I am not such an old fool as to suppose that you are the same sort of fellow as your comrade; I am sorry indeed, to see that you are obliged to have such a companion; come, wife, pour us out a cup of wine, we want it bad enough."—"Here, my good boy," said Bertha kindly, as she handed Henri the cup, "drink a hearty draught. The Virgin bless his sweet face, if he is not weeping!—aye, he is not fit to be a soldier!—how came your cruel parents to suffer you to leave them?" added she. Poor Henri's heart melted at this parental kindness, the first that he had known, since he left his native village. "Oh, do not say a word against my parents," said Henri, "I ran away from them! My father would never have given his consent to my being a soldier; so I left home without it! and I shall perhaps be killed in battle, without having received his forgiveness! I never thought of this before!"—"Why, that was just like my old friend Pierre Clerac," exclaimed Lugo, "*he* used to say that no child of his"—"*What*, Pierre Clerac?" asked Henri eagerly. "Why, he lived in Rousillon, when I knew him; he married the pretty Ninon Beauvais, and they

went to live somewhere near the Blanco Mountains, but—"Oh! it's all true; they are my dear, kind, deceived parents!" exclaimed Henri, with another burst of grief. "Ah child! child!" said Bertha reproachfully; "what a hard heart you must have, to leave such parents, against their consent! you must be a bad boy, I fear; so if you should fall in battle, they will not have much cause for sorrow."—"Nay, wife, don't be too hard upon him: I'll lay my life yon little insolent varlet led the way, and induced our young friend here, to do this wicked deed."—"I always wished to be a soldier," said Henri; nobly refraining from throwing the blame on Lopez.—"Aye, aye, I see how it is; come, I won't have you fret yourself any more to-night; you have done what CANNOT be undone; so you must now make the best of it; and as you have chosen a profession that is so hateful to your father, you must now try to become an honour to it and to him. In the first place, I would advise that you should no longer call that bad boy your friend; he will lead you into conduct that will disgrace you; and, in the next place, I would have you keep up your spirits; if you give way thus, you will be unfit to meet the enemy; and if you should turn coward and run away, what would your father say then? Come, I have given you a sermon worthy of any old friar; so now farewell for to-night. I want you to be in your comfortable bed, that my good Bertha has got ready for you. Good night, may the saints have you in their holy keeping." Lugo assisted Henri to bed, where he fell asleep in two minutes; and his kind host returned to his wife.

The inmates of Mota's house had been asleep about three hours, when they were suddenly awaked by the alarming call, "To arms!" the deep sleep of the toil-worn boys was forcibly broken, and they were obliged to obey a summons which they found more difficult than they had ever known.

A scout (that is a person sent privately to observe the motions of the enemy) had just arrived, bringing the unwelcome intelligence that a detachment of French troops had taken up a position for the night, in a wood, about seven miles north of the village, where the Spanish soldiers were stationed, Not a moment was to be lost;—In the middle of the night, without a moon, —in a furious rain—by the uncertain glare of torches —some of the men half awake, others half tipsy—many stiff and foot-sore, from their late long marches—and few, very few, at all prepared for the unexpected call; —such was the scene that poor Henri (the most wretched of the whole group) beheld, as he staggered and limped out from the hospitable abode of the worthy old saddler: he, and his kind-hearted wife, helped him to put on his unsoldierlike dress, which had not yet been changed for regimentals; and having shaken hands with, and prayed the Virgin to have him in her holy care, they parted from him. Henri seemed as if he was in a terrible dream; so desolate did he feel, and so shocking was the whirl of confusion around him. As soon as Lopez heared the call he roused himself; but being entirely in the dark, he could neither, for some minutes, recollect where he was, nor find the way to the door; he soon however remembered all the hu-

miliating events that attended his supper and bed, and his wicked disposition quickly prompted him to revenge himself; so he holla'd and bawled, and kicked at the door, till Bertha heard him, and came to let him out; when he said, "I have lost my hat in the stable, I must have a light that I may look for it." She went for a lamp, and brought it under a bowl, which she held over it, to prevent its being extinguished by the wind and rain. "Here it is," said she, "take care you do not set fire to the straw."—"Oh yes, never fear!" replied the wicked boy, at the same time lighting a heap in the inner stall. "Oh here it is!" added he, "all's safe; take the lamp, and let me run, will you?" so he darted off, almost overturning the poor old woman, and flew through the house, unobserved by Lugo, who was busily employed up stairs, with Henri. Lopez was soon lost amongst the crowd; and when he was safe there, he looked back, in the direction of Mota's dwelling, and saw, with the delight and the laugh of a demon, the red flames spring up above the humble roof, and the clouds of livid smoke rolling over the tops of the neighbouring houses, and spread itself among the confused, moving mass of uncouth human beings, by whom he was surrounded.

Just as Henri parted from his friends, the sudden glare from the burning stable behind, rose over the house, and lighted the distant scene of warlike bustle: the old couple started with affright, to see the flames at all; but when they were aware that their own property was illuminating the black heavens, "making night hideous;" and when they thought of their faithful

old mule Theresa, their dismay was distressing! Bertha's shrieks quickly brought some neighbours to their assistance; who hastened with the vessels of rain-water which had been filled during this drenching night; these being so near at hand, aided by the promptness of the neighbours, and the still pouring rain, fortunately subdued the fire;—which, though it looked tremendous in the darkness, was only caused by the dry straw, blazing through the broken roof of the stable. Poor Theresa, being by good chance in the outer stall, was led away from it without injury. As the troops marched out of the village, Henri had the happiness, and Lopez the sorrow, to look back and find that no gleam of light remained above old Lugo's dwelling.

The ill-appointed, aukward, inexperienced company, to which Henri belonged, was increased in numbers and respectability by being united with the detachment which was quartered in the village; they amounted in all to several hundred men. The intelligence which the scout had brought was, that the number of the enemy did not exceed five hundred, that they were anxious to avoid an engagement with the Spaniards, as they were hastening by a circuitous route, (that is, by going round) to reach the main army which had advanced towards Madrid. It was therefore necessary to prevent this detachment of French, from joining their countrymen; and it was for this purpose that the Spanish soldiers were roused from their midnight rest, and were now marching through muddy roads, under a pouring rain, and in nearly total darkness. This dismal situation was however soon

rendered less wretched by the sudden clearing of the clouds, which rolled away before a mighty wind; and by the gradual approach of the grey dawn, that seemed to struggle for its existence amongst the huge clouds.

The troops now drew near the wood, the dark outline of which could be seen at a distance. The men were cautioned to move with the utmost wariness and silence; so that no sounds might reach the enemy to inform them of their danger. And now it was that the naturally good, affectionate, and tender heart of the disobedient and imprudent Henri, ached, with the bitterness of his sorrow and repentance. It was not *fear* that shook his frame, with all the fierceness of an ague fit, for he was no coward on any occasion, excepting to do *wrong!* he felt at the present time the full force of his cruel and selfish conduct. He wondered, as he retraced all the circumstances of his flight from home, how he could think any of his reasons good, or strong enough to induce him to be guilty of so base an action;—his self-esteem, too, was much hurt by the reflection that it was the fear of being ridiculed by Lopez, which was the chief cause of his leaving the happy home of his youth! —"And what a fool have I been," murmured he, inwardly, "to prefer the approbation of such a wicked fellow as Lopez, to the comfort of my dear parents, and the approval of my own heart! what a cruel, vain, weak fool, I have shewn myself too! to leave my poor dear mother, and my gentle helpless sisters to all the perils of war, and the cruelties of the French soldiery, when I might, by staying with them, have fought for them—as I am so fond of fighting, it seems!—and thus have

done my duty; at the same time convincing my father that it was neither the love of military finery, nor the wish to lead the wild life of a soldier, which made me like the profession! Now what must he think of me! With what contempt and dislike must he talk of me! Oh!!" groaned Henri, so heavily, that the stranger, a well-accoutred soldier, who marched by his side, thought him either ill or terrified; "what ails thee, lad?" asked he, "are you ill? if you are, start out of the ranks and lie down; you will not be missed, for you won't be fit to fight, if you are out of health, *or out of heart*," added he, slyly, and peeping down into Henri's pale, thin, face, which was streaming with repentant tears;—"Oh, oh! I guessed as much! What my young señor, your courage is running away, is it? —well, I thought when I saw your martial figure, and fierce display of warlike weapons," glancing with a smile of disdain at his ragged clothes, and wretched pike stick, "I thought the good people at Madrid, must be dreadfully off for protectors of the country, to admit such a tower of terror as you are!" Poor Henri was too much bowed down in spirit and strength, to reply to this taunting speech of his heartless comrade, who, finding the youth "*sulky*" as he said, and remembering the orders for silence, held his peace, and left the broken-spirited boy to his sad thoughts.

A party had been despatched round the back of the little wood, in order to drive the French troops out into the unlevel plain, in which the main body of Spaniards were waiting to receive them, hidden from the view of the enemy by the numerous hollows of

the ground. The morning had become light and fine; the Spaniards of Henri's detachment were anxious for the sound of their comrades' attack, which was to be made with a loud shout, in order to terrify the French, and throw them into confusion; when as the first slanting beams of the golden sun rushed in streams of glory over the plain, the yells and shouts of the party behind the wood were heard; the French were alarmed; the boles of the trees appeared to be in motion, and the underwood, all alive with human beings, as they hurried in confusion to the open ground. Here they paused, rallied, and prepared to wait for their noisy assailants in ambush, when their far more numerous enemy on the plain, hastily formed into order, and rushed forward to make a speedy attack, knowing that at the first fire (so it had been agreed between the two commanders of the Spanish detachments) their comrades in the wood were to hasten to their aid. Henri was borne along with the rapid movement of his division; and the first sound of battle reached his ears in the discharge of muskets all around him. The noise was astounding; and had it not been for the excitement (that is, rousing bustle) of the scene, he would have fallen with sheer alarm. Before the terror-stricken French could manœuvre so as to return the attack from this unexpected quarter, the troops who had fired, crouched down on the plain behind the hillocks, in order that fresh volleys might be discharged directly by their comrades. When the smoke cleared away, the Spaniards saw that the position of the enemy was changed, and it was evident that a sudden attack was intended by them: but the fire of

the natives was first returned by their invaders, which dealt wounds and death all round the sickening Henri, who yet, however, had presence of mind to seize a musket from the convulsive death-grasp of his nearest fallen comrade; and now the assault became general and desperate; the French fought for their lives; the Spaniards for their lives and country; and frightful was the human butchery that then took place! Poor Henri half wild with the "din of war," and its dreadful havoc, flew over the mangled bodies of his comrades, hardly knowing why he did so, when a random ball struck his left leg; with a bound, from the sudden agony, he fell to the earth without sense or motion, close by a groaning countryman. When he recovered his senses, the sun was riding high and splendid; and, as if in mockery of the woe beneath, was pouring a flood of heat on the defenceless head of the unfortunate boy: all was quiet around him; the horrid noise of war seemed still to sound in his ears; but as he looked on each side, he could see no living creature. He felt that he should now indeed die; and again he lost all sense. Several Spaniards, however, were then on the fatal plain, some examining the bodies to see if any yet lived, in order to remove the sufferers to a house, which had been fitted up as a temporary hospital, in the nearest village; while another party of soldiers were digging the ground, in order to bury those who were dead. The former party had now approached the spot where Henri and his dead comrade lay apart from the others. Long accustomed to scenes of this nature, a battle field had no terrors for these men; they could even joke

on the wounds and death around them. "I say, Pietro, this fellow was knocked off his feet while he was running away, I dare be sworn; what a way he is from the thick of the fight! and this young slip of boy intended to run off, too; but then, poor chit, there's some excuse for him." Here a fluttering sigh from poor Henri, stopped the soldier's remarks. "Aye," said Pietro, he's alive, sure enough, though I see no wound upon him: as sure as we are here *he thinks he's dead!* but he has only fainted with the fright! Halloo! up my young general!" said he, giving Henri a heave with his foot. "Here you've let us get the victory without your wisdom and valour to guide and help us! Come, up I say, and help us if you have nothing else to do!"—"Stop, Pietro, replied another of the Spaniards, he is wounded; his leg is broken, or badly hurt; let us raise him up, and carry him to the cart, it is full enough, and we have many miles, you know, to take the poor chaps." They carefully lifted him up, and he was placed with several others in the vehicle, which was driven slowly forward; and the wounded soldiers after enduring two hours of frightful suffering, caused by the jolting of their conveyance, were brought to the dwelling which had been converted into a hospital. Here, fortunately, a French surgeon was appointed to attend the victims of the morning's slaughter; a man who was an ornament to his country and his profession; and to his humane and judicious care, this second cart-load of misery and suffering was consigned.

"Wife! Bertha!—Dame Mota! where are you?" shouted old Lugo, as he hastened into his little dark

room, which served for parlour, shop, kitchen, and sometimes bed-room. "Where can the old dame be?" added he, impatiently, and preparing to go to the neighbouring houses in search of her.—"The Saints protect the good man! what ails him?" said Bertha, bustling in from the stable—"Why, Lugo, you are enough to frighten away what little wit time has left me!"—"Well, well, never mind that. Who do you think I have seen just now, *dead* to all appearance, taken into the hospital?—he can't be dead neither, for they would not have brought him away from the 'battle-bed' that you talked of last night, dame; so there's hope yet!"—"What, poor Pierre's pretty son!" exclaimed Bertha, "ah, I thought he was too good to live! I warrant me, now, yon wicked varlet has not had even so much as a scratch or a singe in the skirmish!"—"You are wrong in both your fancies, Bertha, for Henri *is* alive, and must, *shall* live, if I can make him, that he may be once more a joy to his parents; and the rascal Lopez, I saw him brought in the first load, without an arm;—that arm was gone, wife, with which he fired our stable. You said he held the lamp in his left hand, didn't you? Well, a less punishment or affliction would have softened me! When I saw his young face hanging pale and in agony over his shoulder, my old eyes felt so bleared, and my foolish knees shook, as if I had been doing a guilty deed! I wished, too, I had not made him sleep in the stable; not but what I have slept there myself, above half my long life; but the poor little——" "Aye! there now, Lugo, that is just like you!—You did right; so don't be fretting yourself as if you had tried to do the lada

mischief. Poor fellow! he must alter much, though, before he will become such a noble boy as Henri! And I know this,—that if I had two sons like these youths, I would rather mourn over both their cold 'battle-beds,' than that they should *both* live! for all the comfort I should have from the goodness of Henri, would be poisoned by the wickedness of Lopez."—"I shall go to-morrow and ask Monsieur le Bon, the surgeon, if I may see and speak to the poor wounded boys," replied Lugo, without attending to his wife's observation; "I shall perhaps be able to comfort them."—Do, dear husband!" returned Bertha, as he quitted the room.

The next day Lugo went, as he said he would, to the surgeon, and asked permission to see the two youths; he was desired to stay but a very short time, as they were very ill, though their wounds were not considered dangerous. Monsieur le Bon was fearful that fever would be incurred, if they were allowed to talk; so Lugo promised to remain only a few minutes, and then he went into the place of suffering. The poor boys scarcely noticed him, for their senses had been stupified by opium, in order that the painful operation of examining Henri's leg, and amputating, (that is, cutting off) Lopez's arm, might be less felt. The kind-hearted old man hastily left the hospital; and as he walked home, grieving for the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, and wondering why kings should love war, and sacrifice such numbers of the human race, a sudden thought darted into his mind, which seemed to put the activity of youth again into his old bones. "Aye, this very night will I!" exclaimed he, as he

bustled through the little shop, where Bertha sat, expecting him to come with news of their favourite Henri. "Lugo! why, husband! here I am waiting for you to have your dinner; the sopa* will be quite cold." He did not answer; so she followed him into the stable, where she found him examining Theresa's feet, and rubbing her down.—"Lugo! I say! I do think the good man is beside himself," she continued, as he reached down the saddle, and looked at its girths, then hunted about for the long disused bit and bridle, which he absolutely began to clean.—"In the name of all the holy Saints, why won't you speak to your old wife, your own Bertha?" said she, her voice faltering. "Only speak one word, Lugo!" This roused him from his deep thought.—"My dear wife! my good Bertha!" replied he, coming to her, as she stood leaning against the door; "I did not mean to be unkind to you: I meant to tell you the whole. I'll just throw a good feed of corn to poor old Terry, and then I'll come in to dinner, and you shall know all about it."—"About what?" thought Bertha, as she returned into the house. "Well, now for it!" exclaimed the cheerful old man, coming in, seating himself, and beginning to eat his scalding soup, which Bertha had heated again.—"Come now, guess!—How the sopa burns one!—I wonder what I shall have for my dinner to-morrow!—Come, wife, you don't guess,—you don't eat,—you don't speak! Well," continued he, "I am going one of my old favourite distant journeys, that I have so long given up."

* Soup made with bread, hot water, and garlic, which has sometimes a morsel of butter in it.

Lugo had been a muleteer for more than twenty years, and had very reluctantly quitted the roving life, in consequence of his increasing age; and by his wife's earnest request, he had taken to the business of a saddler, to which he had been brought up; so he had been no long journey for several years.

"Oh the Virgin! journey! a long journey in these perilous times? Oh my dear, dear Lugo! tell me what you mean," said poor Bertha, quite bewildered and sorrowful.—"Now then, I'll try and tell you all about it," replied Lugo, putting down his wooden bowl, leaning his arms on the table, and looking kindly at his wife,—"It struck me, as I was coming home from the hospital, where I saw the poor wounded lads, that our good friends, Pierre Clerac and Ninon must be in a terrible fright about the fate of their son: you know, dear Bertha, we should be glad to hear any tidings of our dear Jaques, after he sailed for America;—don't weep, wife!—don't weep! our prayers to the blessed Virgin will be heard, and he will return to us some time. I only reminded you of our Jaques, that you might pity Pierre, and raise no objection to my going to tell him of Henri's situation."—"You need not be cruel to me, Lugo, in order to make me pity Pierre: I grieve for his and Ninon's sorrow; but I have your safety to care for; at your age to go above a hundred and fifty miles across the country, in troublous times, and you not being in the habit lately of riding more than ten miles at one time. Indeed, husband,—nay, do not laugh: see you have kicked down the pitcher of wine with your folly. I'm sure I said nothing that ought to be laughed at," added she, offended at his

violent mirth.—"Oh! ho! ho! my safety, forsooth! Who do you think would hurt an old fellow like me? No, no! I have no fears; and I should be glad to see that you had more courage; but I cannot wish that you had more fondness and kindness for your old husband, my good Bertha, as I do not think it possible for a man to have a better wife," said he tenderly, and kissing the withered cheek that was as dear to him then as it had been when it bloomed for him thirty years before.—"Well, as you are resolved to take this frightful, long journey, I cannot hinder you, husband; and if I could be sure you would return safe to me, I would not try to prevent you," replied she kindly.—"Come, then, the earlier I go, the quicker I shall be with you again; so, as soon as I can get Theresa ready, I will start," replied he, getting up hastily, and proceeding again to the mule in the stable. He soon saddled her, and then took leave of his wife. The two old friends, Lugo and Theresa, who had travelled so many hundred miles together, quickly set off in high spirits; and 'tis hard to say which seemed the happier of the two, as they trotted out of the little village, and gained the open country, where the yellow sun was lingering in all his evening glory; the birds were singing, the lizards sporting, and the buds bursting into summer beauty:—the whole landscape was a picture of calm delight.

"Ah!" sighed Lugo, "all this looks as it used to do, when my own bones were younger, and when this good, faithful servant"—patting old Theresa's neck—"bore her master's weight with more ease, though not more willingness, than she does now:—don't set your

saucy ears at me," added he, playfully catching her long sleek ear in his hand, as she turned first one and then the other, to listen to the voice of her kind master. Well, I declare, every thing seems around me as it did twenty years ago!—No, not every thing.

"Under these four beautiful chesnut trees, the lads and lasses used to meet; and many a fandango have I danced beneath their beautiful boughs! No one is near the spot now! Ah war! war! how many aching hearts hast thou caused in this once happy country! How many joyous voices hast thou stifled! Well, I thank the blessed Virgin, and all the saints, (if they had any thing to do in the business,) that I am not a king: if I had been so unfortunate, as to be obliged to sit on a throne, instead of across your old back, my good Terry, and been forced to wear a shining uncomfortable crown, without a brim to keep the sun out of my eyes, instead of my easy old hat! oh, what a miserable wretch I should have been! and who knows, perhaps I might have then been fond of war! Well, well! 'tis no use to be low-spirited; happy times will come once more when the invaders are driven back into France, and then every village will send out it's happy groups again, at evening time, as I used to see them. Why, you old jade! (again speaking to the mule,) I do believe you remember, as well as I do, that I used to sing to you, as we jogged along! I always thought you travelled better with a song in your ears! Come, what shall it be?" Here an unintentional *swish*, with his whip, set Theresa into a slow canter; and the movement, from past recollections, made him strike up a favourite old tune,

which kept time to the sober easy pace of the sagacious beast. This is Lugo's song:*—

MULETEER'S SONG.

1.

Merrily sound the castanets,
In groves around, where sprightly sets
Of bright eyed girls at evening meet,
To seize that hour so cool and sweet,
That all maidens love.
Hark, now I hear the merry guitar
That always is near where castanets are;
Where elegant forms, and slender feet,
In mazes sweet,
So gracefully move.

2.

But the echoes of music are all that must cheer
The heart of the wandering muleteer,
Who cannot endure in these groves to stay,
For his home lies before him a weary way;
Ah home! sweet home!
But still I can sing of my own green shade,
My own guitar, and my own dear maid;
Whose gentle heart I too long have loved,
Too surely prov'd,
From her to roam.

Theresa appeared to recollect the old *cantering* song, and went with her master merrily on, for many a mile; and thus we will leave them, while we go back to the pleasant home of poor Henri; and see what has happened in the little village, since his departure from it.

In the morning after Amie had gone so wretchedly

* As a genuine Spanish air, which was recently brought from the mountains of Spain, may prove interesting and acceptable to my young readers, I have introduced it. No young lady under nine years of age, will of course, omit a trial of its pretty simple melody, on her piano, or guitar. It was really sung by such a person as our old friend Lugo is represented to be. From the muleteer's voice it was learned by an English gentleman, and by him was sung to a musical friend of the author.

to bed, she awoke, with a sad feeling at her heart, so heavy, yet so indistinct, that she thought she had been dreaming; but the truth soon darted across her recollection, and she left the side of the yet sleeping Marget: she dressed herself, and went carefully up stairs to Henri's room, hoping to find that he had repented of his rashness, and had returned to his comfortable bed. No—everything was as she had left it; all his boyish weapons, and ingenious contrivances for his amusement, were hung round the walls; and they reminded poor Amie so forcibly of his happy and cheerful disposition, that she sat down and wept, as much for her own loss, as for her brother's uncertain fate. She now recollected that her parents would soon be stirring? and fearing to meet them when they should first discover Henri's flight, she went down stairs, and out of the house, to avoid them. She was milking the cow, when she heard her father's hasty steps coming towards her, brushing over the long bush grass: she dared not look up; when he said, "Amie, where's Henri? he has not been in bed all night." Her voice was thick, and it faltered as she told him she did not know. "What ails the girl?" said Pierre, going round to look in her face, which leaned against the flank of the cow—she had turned it from her father. "Amie! wicked girl! you are telling me a falsehood—*your first falsehood!* you do know something of Henri's absence—you have been weeping; your *eyes* tell truth, though your tongue deceives!" These harsh words, the most upbraiding that her father had ever addressed to his excellent daughter, hurt her already wounded feelings so severely, that she

cried bitterly; she, however, soon told him all that had passed between her brother and herself, and related the whole of his plan, till she lost sight of him at eleven o'clock the night before. Pierre was hurt, grieved, distressed. He told Amie that she had done wrong in not having informed him of Henri's plan; but he kissed her, as he added, you still love *truth*, I observe, my dear child, and I rejoice at it. I will not reproach you farther; I see you have suffered enough, without any additional cause for sorrow." Ninon sat, the image of despair, for some time after she heard of her son's flight; and Marget grieved for hours.—Pierre feared for his wife's health, the shock was so great; but his alarms were quickly increased, and turned to a new calamity. A terrified peasant had just rushed into the village, with the intelligence that a detachment of French troops were on their way to Madrid, and would come through Maro in the evening! it was now noon;—all the inhabitants were instantly in consternation;—few could act with the necessary firmness; many fled far away into the forest;—some set about burying the few valuables they might possess, particularly their wine and bacon:—others sat in stupid terror, awaiting the enemy; and no one but Pierre adopted any thing like a plan for the preservation of the lives and property of his dear family.—"Father! father! the cave! Henri, dear kind, thoughtful Henri's cave!" exclaimed Amie, as soon as the first shock of terror had subsided. "Aye, my good girl, I should not have thought of it I really believe. Ninon! dearest wife! think of our girls! think of our own safety, and the little savings of our

own industry! rouse yourself, Ninon!" said Pierre, with a face of eager distress. "HE should have been *here* to fight!" exclaimed Ninon in reply, bursting into tears, the first she had shed; in the few words she had just expressed, Henri's cruelty and ingratitude appeared to have struck her for the first time. It gave her spirit to resent his conduct; hitherto she had been afflicted only. Not one of their neighbours would listen to the plan of going with the Cleracs to their cave; so they loaded themselves with their most useful and valuable things, as quickly as possible, and traced their way to the cavern, partly by the help of the juniper berries, which were not nearly all devoured; partly by Henri's notches on the trees, but chiefly by Amie's recollection of the path. While she and her mother with difficulty removed the upper stones, and pushed the things which they had brought, into the cave, Pierre returned home for more of the contents of their dwelling; and thus he continued to go backwards and forwards, till word was brought into the village that a party of soldiers were actually seen making their way through the forest. "Oh my wife and girls!" exclaimed the terrified man, as he threw down his load and hurried over the same road that he had travelled two or three times already: he had driven their cow into the forest, and had tethered her (that is, tied her so that she could not range away many yards from a tree,) near the cave.

Just as Pierre arrived at the cavern, he caught a view of glittering bayonets among the distant branches. They were advancing rapidly.—"What shall I do," exclaimed he, "I have yet to climb to

the entrance; they will see me; fire at me; kill me at the very feet of my wife and children; and their shrieks will expose them to the insults and brutality of the soldiery! Heavenly father! what shall I do?" added he fervently, and in bitter anguish. At that moment, his keen eye saw the body of men turn a little aside into another rough path, when, like a squirrel, he instantly sprang up the entrance stones, and came clattering down inside the cave, to the terror of its inmates. "Hush! for your lives!" said he in a loud whisper; and they drew near him in silence. "Hark! there! do you hear nothing?" "Yes; the trampling of many feet!" replied Ninon, with alarm in her face. "Hush!"—"Again!"—"HALTE!" cried a loud voice, giving the French word of command to stop. The hearts of the cavern-family died within them, as they listened, and looked through the chinks of the stones, at the horde of armed men, which had halted close to their retreat. "I tell you, corporal, I saw him climb up this rock," said a voice. "Well, what then, captain," said a lieutenant, "it was but *one* man, we can't get much from him; besides, where can he be now? Suppose the poor wretch should have climbed the trees, it is a pity to detain the whole party, while we hunt for, and cut one man to pieces!"—"I do not wish to cut him to pieces," replied the captain, indignantly; I want to obtain information respecting the nearest route to Madrid, and of the state of the army in this part. I think we have mistaken the way, too, we ought to have seen the little village of Maro, before now; we shall be benighted in this never-ending forest, instead

of sleeping under cover, at the village."—"I'm sure I have no objection to all you say, captain," returned the lieutenant, more humbly; but where is the man?" —"It does seem absurd to look for him, I own, replied the captain, we shall, perhaps, see some other straggler; and yet here is a cow tied to a tree! some person is surely concealed near us! well, we shall waste too much time: MARCH!" shouted he; and the whole of the traders in death moved on!

It would be impossible to describe the alarm which Ninon and Amie felt during this conversation! They could hardly believe that they heard the trampling footsteps of the soldiers becoming fainter on the hollow ground; but when Marget (who had climbed up the ragged side of the cave, and cautiously looking out of the gap, found the green space quiet and clear,) exclaimed, "Dear mother, they are all gone, and the cow is safe, too;" Ninon and Amie rushed at once to the worthy Pierre, and sobbed out their thankfulness and happiness at his escape. After they had become more calm, Pierre proposed, in order to divert their thoughts from poring too much over the dangers from which they had been hitherto spared, that they should explore the cavern. "Oh, we have looked a little about it, father, said Marget. I held the lamp, didn't I, Amie? but we did not go far; oh, it is a dismal, dark, great frightful place; and I wish we were not obliged to stay in it!"—"Well, silly one, you can go out and sleep with the cow, if you prefer it!" replied Pierre. "No, no, father," returned Marget, "it is dismal; but I had rather be here with you, my mother,

and Amie, than in any other place."—"Come, wife," said Pierre, cheerfully, "let us try and make our dark home comfortable; suppose we all go farther into the cavern, and look for a more convenient spot; the persons who once lived here, I dare say, were fond of comforts, and had them too; look, here is a fire-place; we will use it, to dress our supper in; I should think the smoke found its way out at an opening above, among the trees; so I suppose the robbers never lighted a fire but at night, for fear of being discovered by the smoke. Aye, here," continued Pierre, "are the sleeping-rooms, caves formed in the rock."—"Here is a bedstead, too, I declare!" exclaimed Amie. "How decayed the wood is," said her mother; "the cavern must have been without inhabitants for a great number of years."—"Yes, it has," replied her husband; "for father Paulo once told me a long story of a terrible set of fellows who lived ——. Hallo! what was that which I struck my foot against? I thought I should have let the lamp fall!"—"Oh, dear, if you had, we should have been in the dark, in this gloomy place, and we should have been obliged to grope our way back to the entrance, for the flint and steel," said little Margret, getting close to her mother, and trembling very much. Pierre bid her not be frightened, and then set the lamp carefully on the ground, that he might see what he had struck. "A large iron-ring, and fixed tight in the ground, I declare! I can't move it!" added he.—"What could it be for?" said Amie. "It is very strange!"—Ninon, help me; pull; I see the shape of a square, in the ground; I have loosened it a little; come, let us try again."

Ninon helped; and then Amie; but they could do nothing with it: it seemed less firm; but appeared as if it was locked or bolted; it was: they saw a trap door, of thick timber, and it was let into the rocky ground; for Pierre kneeled down, and traced the four sides of it. "Well," said he, "we must give up our search for an opening; suppose we bring our things into one of these sleeping rooms, and make ourselves as happy as we can! Oh! here is yet another room! oh, ha! this is the captain's, I suppose! Look; here is a door, only it has fallen off the hinges; we will set it up again; it will help to keep out the draught of air, which makes the lamp flicker so, that I am afraid it will go out before we can get the fire lighted." They now all began to busy themselves; and in a short time a blazing faggot threw its cheerful glare over the whole space near them; the girls smiled, as the light and heat increased; and they went merrily backwards and forwards to bring all their furniture and utensils from the entrance. "How hungry you must be, Pierre," said Ninon. "Yes, I am, and tired too; we had better eat a hasty supper, and go to bed: thousands of our fellow-countrymen are worse off than we are; let us be grateful, my dear children, for the comfort and safety we have found in this ugly but useful cavern!" Amie's eyes met her mother's at this moment; and each knew that Henri was the subject of their thoughts. Pierre saw it, too, and tried to turn their attention to other concerns. "I shall go as soon as the sun is up, to see how the poor creatures are, whom we left in the village for ——" At that moment a heavy firing

burst on their ears, and terrified the girls and their mother, very much. "Again! how deep and hollow it sounds in this dreary place; but how dreadful it must be at Maro!" said Ninon. "Oh, if our poor neighbours were but with us, this vast place would hold them all!"

It seems almost selfish and wicked for us to be sitting here in security and comfort, while so many of our friends are in sorrow and in danger." Just then a loud shriek echoed through the cave, and made even Pierre start up and turn pale. No one appeared able to speak, but sat staring at each other. A groan now reached them; it came from a long, dreary passage, opposite to that which led to the entrance. Pierre snatched up the lamp, and holding it high above him, walked quickly down the arched way, while the terrified mother and her daughters crowded together, and watched his dark figure as the thin smoke and waving flame streamed over his head. The passage was so long, that the lamp looked like a little star, before they saw him set it down; the next moment he called out, "Ninon! Amie! make haste, bring some water, Ella Riba has fainted." They instantly jumped up, Ninon snatched a pitcher of water, Amie seized a flask of wine, and with Marget close behind them, they fled along the damp vault towards the light, where they found poor Ella Riba, the mother of Lopez, supported by Pierre: she looked so pale, that little Marget thought she was dead, and began to cry. Ninon found that the poor woman was much torn and scratched by trees and brambles; and Amie looking up, saw a large hole in the roof, through which she

had fallen, as the boughs and leaves plainly shewed. She soon opened her eyes, after she had drank a little wine, and was not long before she knew and thanked them for their kindness. As soon as she was able to walk, Pierre and Ninon helped her along the passage, and placed a bed near the fire for her to rest on, for she was cold. She wept bitterly as she lay, and at last said, "My poor husband is dead, Ninon! The news of the French soldiers being expected, was such a shock to him, that it seemed to break his heart." Here she sobbed loudly.—"You have for some time expected this sad misfortune, Ella," said Ninon, kindly;—"think how long he has been ill; you must not give way to so much grief;—come, take a little more wine; it will warm you, and I hope you will soon be able to sleep." —"Ah, but Ninon, I was obliged to leave my husband as soon as he was dead; Avia made me go, for he said I could do no good now, and that I should be cut to pieces by the soldiery, if I staid; so we ran into the forest; but I soon missed Avia and his wife, and I wandered till it was dark; then I heard the firing, so I climbed a tree for fear of being seen by the soldiers; and as I moved along a branch that was too weak, it broke, and I fell among some bushes, which also gave way, and let me through a great hole into this place." Pierre begged the poor woman would try to sleep, and that she would not speak any more.—"Wife, you shall lie down too, and Ella won't then be tempted to talk. I rejoice that she is with us; but we could have waited till she had got a little strength, before she had told us her perilous adventure." —"Good night, Ella! I hope you will try and sleep,"

said Amie, as she rolled a cloak round her sister and herself, and lay down near the fire. Ninon too wrapped a coverlid about her, and crept near Ella, to assist her if she should want any thing; while Pierre leaned quietly against the wall of the chimney. All the party but himself were soon asleep; he could not close his eyes. Many subjects kept him wakeful; so to direct his thoughts, he resolved to go again to the iron ring, and examine it more carefully. He took a stout stick and the lamp with him, and gently passed through the sleeping group. Again he set down his light to examine the trap door; then he took out his knife, and with as little noise as possible, he scraped away the dirt from the square piece of wood, and all about the ring: a little notch in the middle at last caught his notice; this he pushed with the knife handle; but it had been so long unused, and exposed to the damp, that he could not stir it; then he poured a few drops of oil on it, in order to ease it; and at last with his stick he moved the spring back, and to his great joy found that the door could be lifted up! Pierre cautiously raised the heavy wood work, and found that it had a lock as well as spring bolt on it; but the damp had eaten through the iron parts of the lock, and spoiled it: the hinges also were nearly destroyed, and they grated so loudly, in spite of his caution, that the noise awoke Amie; she remained for a minute looking at her father in wonder, then gently disengaging herself from her sister and the cloak which had covered them, she got up and crept silently towards the dismal looking hole which her father had now quite uncovered: he was stooping to hold the lamp inside this

mysterious vault, that he might see if he could go down into it, to find what it contained, or where it led to, when Amie's clothes brushed against his hand! He was so startled, that he let the lamp fall, and they were both in the dark.—"Father!" whispered Amie, "Father! I did not mean to frighten you; I came quietly for fear of disturbing Ella and my mother:—I awoke, and saw you lifting that heavy door, so I thought I could help you. How sorry I am that the lamp is gone out. I will soon light it again though, for I know where the oil is, and there is a little fire left." So she felt about for the lamp, as her father replied, "Why really, Amie, I can't deny that you almost frightened, or rather startled me;—take care you don't fall down the hole!—here is the oil, I brought it with me." They had soon a light again, and their curiosity was very great to explore this strange vault. Amie held the lamp, while her father went down some rough slimy steps.—"You may come too, Amie," said he,—"give me the light." She looked a little pale, when she found herself in a small arched gloomy vault, with decayed chests, which she at first thought were coffins, all round; some had the lids off, others were lying sideways; and but one black mouldering box was whole, and had evidently not been opened when the others were emptied of their contents. Pierre easily forced off the decayed lid, and took out several bundles of papers, which were closely written, but much injured by time and damp.—"Ah, what is here?" exclaimed he, as he drew up a heavy bag, tied at the top, that was rotted too; and as it crumbled in his hand, a

shower of ducats and doubloons,* a diamond cross, and costly rings, fell glittering at Amie's feet! The father and daughter stood looking at each other, and at their treasure, for some minutes in silent astonishment. At last Pierre exclaimed, "Many a heart shall rejoice at this! Maro is, I fear, a heap of smoking ruins; but when the French soldiers have left the country, it shall be builded up again. Here is enough to pay for the whole!" Amie looked with delight at her father's kind face, while he talked of making his fellow-creatures comfortable. "Come, my girl, pick up thy riches, for you too shall help us to do good with them."

Finding nothing else in the vault, they put their money and the papers for greater safety, in one corner, covered with an old board, shut down the trap door, and returned to the fire, which Amie stirred; and then she sat down by her father; "for," said she, "I cannot sleep, and I want you to tell me all you think about this treasure,—why it was put into the vault, and whether we ought to keep it."—"All I think about this treasure, Amie? why, I think the vault was used by the banditti, as a secret and safe place to keep their riches in; and I know that the whole gang was surprised, so that they left this cavern hastily—for father Paolo told me so;—I suspect that in their hurry to carry off their treasures, they did not look into the box which we opened, because they knew that it contained only papers; and I suppose that the captain of the band put the bag of doubloons into it, as a little purse for him-

* Spanish gold coins.

self, unknown to his companions, and so forgot it. Why should we not keep this money, Amie? it has been here unclaimed by any person for many years, and no one of the gang of robbers is alive to tell us the owner or owners of it, if they even were known to the villains; so you see there can be no scruple in our keeping it. But I am anxious to go to Maro, to see if I can persuade any of our neighbours to come and share our safe abode. It must be near day-light." Amie listened attentively to her father's account of the vault, and was glad to find they might keep the treasure without dishonesty. They went together to the mouth of the cave, and heard the birds singing, before they saw the grey dawn through the chinks of the lower stones; Pierre would not take down any of them, but climbed up, and crept out of the hole at the top, which he had scrambled through in the evening. Amie wished much to go with him; but he told her it might be dangerous, if the French troops should be still in the neighbourhood; and promising to be with them as soon as possible, he begged her to remain with her mother.

In a few hours he returned with sad intelligence! scarcely a house was left standing in the whole village! Their own was still burning, Riba's was a heap of black ruins. The troops had seized all the food and wine which they could find, had driven out the few villagers who had been so foolish as to stay, and after sleeping a few hours in the empty houses, had set fire to them, and marched on towards Madrid by the light of the flames. Pierre met with but two of his neighbours, and these he wished to bring back with him; but they had lost their all, and had resolved to enlist in some

Spanish regiment, in order to assist in destroying the invaders. In a day or two, the inhabitants, who had hidden themselves in the forest, began to appear again in the little village; and Pierre's heart ached for the distress which the poor creatures felt when they wandered about the desolate heaps of stones, which had once been their lowly, though comfortable, dwellings. Pierre gave money to several of the distressed creatures, that they might buy provisions, &c. from the nearest town, which had not been visited and pillaged by the French; many wondered where Pierre had obtained the money; but no one asked him, neither did he think it necessary to tell them.

One day, as he stood talking with a neighbour about building up his own cottage, an old man on a mule passed slowly by him; but Lugo Mota—for it was the kind hearted muleteer—knew his friend directly; and was off his mule in an instant.—"My good friend Pierre! Pierre Clerac! what don't you know me? not remember old Lugo Mota? but I was not old then!"—"Ah my worthy fellow! I little expected to see you here; I am truly glad to see you though! Have troubles driven you away from your native town?" —"No! but where's your wife? I have something to tell you both; but I won't let you know it unless the pretty Ninon is with you!"—"Then, old friend, you must leave this dreary spot, and come with me to my cave."—"Your what?"—"my cavern, to be sure! what did you not know that I live under ground? you did not expect to find me a captain of banditti, did you?" said Pierre, trying to look grave. For an instant old Lugo was startled; till he saw a lurking smile on his

friend's face. "Pray," said the muleteer, suddenly, "can you tell me if a man and his wife, named Riba, are alive, and near the village which those invaders have destroyed?"—"Old Lopez is dead, but Ella, his wife, is now in the cavern with Ninon."—Indeed! poor thing! I have news for her too." Pierre wondered what the good Mota could have to inform them of, but he waited till they arrived at the curious place which was now his home; and having told his wife that he had brought an old friend, she came to welcome him. As soon as Lugo had seen the girls, he said, "Is this all your family?" Ninon's eyes filled with tears, and Pierre looked distressed; so Ella Riba said, "no friend, they have a son—and so have I too—and they are both gone together to enlist for soldiers."—"Oh, if I did but know, if I could but hear, any tidings of my poor, dear, noble Henri, I should be so happy!" exclaimed Ninon, suddenly. "What! if he were wounded?" said Lugo, bluntly. "Yes, I want *certain* intelligence of him; this dreadful uncertainty is too terrible!"—"If you are sure you can bear to hear that he is wounded; and your son Lopez, too," added he, turning to Ella, "I can tell you something of him—of them both." They listened eagerly, while he related all that had happened to the two boys, kindly omitting the wicked conduct of Lopez.

While Lugo was speaking, Amie and Marget got nearer and nearer to him, and he found, when he had finished his narrative, that one of his hands was fast locked in Amie's, while little Marget had climbed his knees, and sat looking keenly into his face. "Bless the dear children!" said he, at last, "they would

amply reward one, with those looks, if one had done a dangerous and noble deed: why, my dear," said he, patting Amie's face, I have only taken an old favorite pleasant journey, and you look at me as if I deserved to be worshipped!"—"Next to Heaven, you are our best friend, Lugo," said Pierre, seizing the old man's hand, and shaking it cordially, "can you then wonder that we all feel grateful to you?" Ninon and Ella, of course, were not backward in their thanks, and the good Lugo was fully engaged for the next half hour in answering the questions which they asked him incessantly. In a day or two, Pierre had provided mules for the whole party; and they all set off, with Lugo for their guide, to go and see the wounded boys, and the kind Bertha. That part of the country through which they travelled, had not been ravaged by the invading army, so that their journey was safe and pleasant; and they arrived at the village on the evening of the third day.

"Bertha! my old darling! here I am again, you see!" said Lugo, as he cantered up to the door of his house, where she was sitting busily at work,—"Oh my dear Lugo! you seem to have been away a month! Who are these," continued she "coming after you?"—"Can't you guess? yes, it is Pierre and his family, and the mother of Lopez." The worthy couple bustled about, and their guests were soon comfortably lodged. Ninon was too anxious about her son, to take any rest or refreshment till she had seen him; so Lugo went with her and Ella to the hospital; Pierre and the girls remained with Bertha; for he could not tell that the surgeon would allow so many persons to see the patients at one time.

Monsieur le Bon, the humane surgeon, had become very much attached to Henri, in consequence of having overheard a conversation between him and Lopez, in which they both appeared distressed and repentant; and Henri in particular, shewed so noble and kind a disposition, that one day the doctor went to their bedside, and sitting down, told Henri to let him know their history. So the weakened and wretched boy, told his new friend all the events of his short life, talked of his kind parents and his home, of his sisters, and the joyous way in which he had lived at Maro, till his voice was quite choked, and he sobbed as if his heart would break. The eyes of the good surgeon glistened, as he glanced them at the two sorrowful youths—for the high spirit of Lopez was now subdued; and he bade fair to be a better lad. "Come, come, my boys, you must not grieve; you will, I hope, see your parents again; your wounds are going on well, and you will soon be on the road home if you do not retard (that is keep back), by fretting, the cure of your limbs. "Oh Sir!" said Henri, as soon as he could speak, "you are very good to us, but if you knew my father, and heard his reasons for not wishing me to be a soldier: if you had seen my mother's looks, whenever the subject was talked of; and if you had seen what a home and kind friends I left, only to please myself, you would not treat me so kindly!—Now, if ever I should go back, I shall be a lame and useless fellow in the family; and shall continually remind my parents, that I have been a selfish disobedient son to them!"—"Oh!" exclaimed Lopez, "I am the only one to blame! If I had not teazed and laughed

at him, and dared him to it, he would have been at Maro now!"—"Well, well," said Monsieur le Bon, rising, "I find you are both in the wrong,—and I see that you both suffer for it, in mind and body. It is a severe punishment, and will be a useful lesson. If the first fault which a youth commits, were always attended with painful results, we should have fewer wicked men in the world. But I must go," continued he, "and I wish I had the power to assist you in any other way than attending to the cure of your wounds." He left the room, and as he went down stairs he met Lugo. "Sir! Pray, sir, how are the two young lads whom you allowed me to see some days ago?" said the old man. "Aye, true, I remember, you know something of them. I am just come from them; that—Henri I think is his name, is a worthy boy. I am a good deal interested about him; I wish I could send him home safe to his parents: I should be glad if they knew how bitterly he repents having left them. I want to contrive"—"The blessed Virgin reward your goodness," interrupted Lugo, who stood twisting his hat, biting his lips, and longing to speak. "Oh how pleased his mother will be to hear such a character of him; she's in the next room, sir, with the mother of the other lad. I brought them to ask you if they may see their sons." "How's that? I thought the boy told me they lived at Maro; above a hundred miles from this place."—"It's all true, sir; I went to Maro for them; found the village a heap of ashes; the whole family hid in a cave; the—in short, sir, here is poor Ninon Clerac," opening the door. "My brother Le Bon!" exclaimed she.—"Ninon, dear Ninon! is it indeed you? and is that

noble little fellow up stairs my own nephew. Oh how rejoiced I am to tell you that he is out of all danger!" "He will be lame though, brother, always lame!"— "Well, well, what of that! yon don't deserve to be the mother of such a little hero, if you care about such a trifle! It will be the means of keeping him always out of the army, though: I can tell you that for your comfort. You should have seen him ever since the first day, with what firmness he has borne the painful operation of dressing and examining his wound! but where is Pierre?—I'll go up to Henri, and prepare him to see you.—Where's the old man, and the mother of the other lad? [They had gone to Lopez.] Bless me! I am in a greater bustle and flutter than when I had five and twenty wounded fellows brought in for me to attend to!" Poor Ninon smiled, as he hastily left the room; but her anxiety to see her wounded repentant boy, was so great, that she could not wait till her brother returned: she opened the door, stole softly up stairs, and stopped at a door which she found half open, through which she heard sounds of grief,—she looked in; it was Lopez sobbing on his mother's shoulder, who kneeled on the ground by his bed. Lugo was wiping his eyes with the corner of his cloak; and Le Bon was stooping over the next bed, and whispering to some person in it. Ninon guessed it was her darling boy, but she could see no one; he had covered his face with the bed clothes, and would not be comforted: she drew close, and heard her brother say, "I tell you, Henri, she *will* forgive you—I have seen her." "Oh, no! never! never! they will not, *cannot* forgive me! they ought not!—My father said I should

break her heart; and yet I left my dear kind mother." "But you have not broken my heart, my poor penitent boy," said the soft voice of his mother, on his rough pillow; you have punished yourself; no punishment that I could inflict, would equal that which you now suffer! Look up, Henri, I am waiting to tell you that I firmly believe this your first fault will be your last:' she drew the clothes down gently, and kissed the pale thin cheek of her so lately blooming Henri. The poor boy flung his arms round her neck, and whispered, "This is too much! oh if I could die now!" Le Bon saw the increasing whiteness of his face, and hastily laid him down, telling his mother that she and Ella had better leave the room; "he will be better presently; but in his present weak state the surprise has been too much for him." He had fainted; his mother would fain have staid, but she knew that his uncle was the best judge; so she went down stairs with Ella and Lugo, who immediately bustled off to tell the news of Le Bon, and to bring Pierre to the surgeon's house. The next day Henri was well enough to see the whole of his family and friends. His father took Amie and Marget to the bed-side of the sufferer, and the faces of the girls shewed how keenly they felt for his sorrows and his wounds. Amie after this seldom left her brother for a minute; and when he could quit his bed, she was always at hand, with the little Marget, to assist him, to talk to him, to amuse him, and to sympathise with him.

The cavern treasure (part of which Pierre had brought with him,) was of use in procuring comforts for the boy, as well as accommodations for the whole

party; the other wounded sufferers shared in the benevolent man's attentions; and for the next six weeks every thing went on pleasantly at the village. The worthy surgeon one day told Henri, that if he still preferred the army, he should become one of his assistants; adding, "You will not be a soldier, it is true; but you will have constant opportunities of seeing the kind of courage you so much admire; you will also be of great use, in assisting me, because you are cool, humane, and courageous; so ask your father, and see what he says to it."—"I should above all things like the life you offer me, my dear uncle; but I have now learned to consider others as well as myself; and as my father dislikes the profession, I will not even think of it." His uncle shook his hand warmly, and went to seek Pierre, in order to talk to him on the subject. "Oh, my dear Le Bon," said he in answer to the observation of the surgeon, "Henri quite mistakes me; or rather, he is too young to judge of different circumstances. An *army surgeon*, I as much applaud and honour, as I dislike the fighting trade of the mere hireling; the *one* does good to his fellow-creatures; seeking to heal the wounds which the dealer *in blood* is ever striving to make: the other——, but why need I say more? Yes; let him go with you! I rejoice that such a prospect lies before him." Thus then it was settled, that on Henri's perfect recovery he was to go to his uncle, who was now obliged to join the army in a distant part.

In the mean time, the boys were so far recovered as to be able to sit a mule; but Lugo and Bertha absolutely refused to let any of the party leave them

till the following year, excepting Pierre, who was to go to Maro, and give directions about building a cottage for his own family; also, one for Ella and Lopez; and to assist those of his neighbours who wished to rebuild and remain at Maro; so, soon afterwards Pierre left them. Le Bon *Beauvais*, the brother of Ninon, who was, however, called by his first name only, soon wrote to his sister to say Henri might come to him at Madrid, when he was quite able to travel! and with much regret, on all sides, he went. Lopez, who had less courage and less activity, was sickened of warfare, and (if he had been able,) would not have gone with his friend. The year being expired, our little party, once more, guided by Lugo, and accompanied by Bertha, travelled across the country to Maro, where they found two pretty cottages builded ready for them; and where they persuaded Lugo and Bertha to remain.

Lopez, the once wicked Lopez, became all that his own mother, and the mother of the good pretty Amie, could desire; so that, in a few years, the two families were still more closely united, by the marriage of the children. Henri now become nearly as clever a man in his profession as his uncle; attended his sister's wedding; and peace being soon after restored, he settled in the nearest city to the village of Maro, and became an eminent surgeon. The cavern in the forest was often visited by him, with Amie and Lopez; and the very spot was pointed out to his sister, where he and her husband decided on their selfish act of DISOBEDIENCE.

FINIS.